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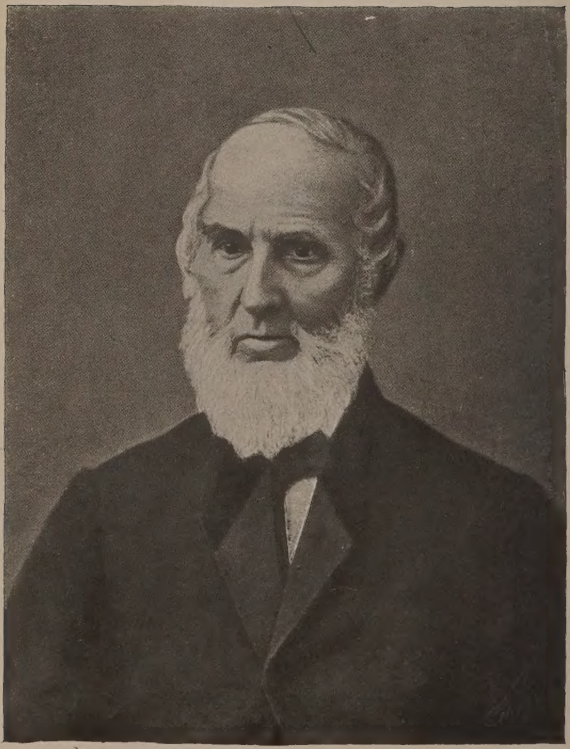
THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

WITH NOTES, INDEX OF FIRST LINES AND CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

EDITED BY

W. GARRETT HORDER

Editor of 'The Treasury of American Sacred Song,' &c.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE present is the first complete edition of the poetical works of JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER issued on this side of the Atlantic. It is a reprint of the Cambridge Edition issued in 1894 by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., of Boston. That was based on the Riverside Edition issued by the same house in America, and by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. in this country. For it, four years before his death, Mr. Whittier wrote introductions and head-notes, revised the text, arranged the poems in the order he thought best, and relegated to an appendix the poems he would, if the public had permitted, have allowed to pass into oblivion. He did indeed discard certain altogether. Up to that time therefore the Riverside was, in the poet's judgment, the definitive edition of his works.

In the four years of his life which followed the issue of that edition he wrote, from time to time, poems which were gathered into a tiny volume printed for private circulation. He seems to have felt that, so far as the general public was concerned, the Riverside Edition represented his completed works. But the verse of so dearly loved a writer could not be kept within a select circle; and after his death these privately printed verses, with certain others of later composition, were gathered into a small volume called *At Sundown*, and put at the service of the public at large. These poems were included in the Cambridge Edition here reprinted, and also those which afterwards appeared in his 'Life' by S. T. Pickard. The present Oxford Edition differs from the Cambridge in two particulars—it does not include the verses written by his sister Elizabeth H. Whittier, nor the biographical sketch of the Poet.

I have endeavoured to make the notes more easy of reference than in the Cambridge Edition, and have corrected a few obvious printer's

errors. With these differences the British public is now offered the poems of Whittier in an edition similar to that regarded as the best on the other side of the Atlantic.

It would not be in harmony with the plan adopted in the Oxford Poets to attempt any critical estimate or indicate the place which Whittier fills among the poets of his own country, or of the larger English-speaking world. Those who love him best would not on the ground of pure poetry place him among the Immortals. A large portion of his verse was written in the heat of the great conflict against slavery, when he had not the time, and perhaps not the ability, to 'squeeze out the whey' of the didactic or commonplace. But it may be affirmed with safety that even in the least poetic of his verses there is a purity of motive and a passion for humanity that make for righteousness. Samuel Taylor Coleridge once said: 'I should almost despair of the man who could peruse the life of John Woolman without an amelioration of heart.' Surely a like remark might be made concerning the verses of JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER. Probably his most poetic, and therefore most enduring, work is to be found in *Poems Subjective and Reminiscent*; and in his *Religious Poems*, where his keenly ethical, and at the same time deeply spiritual, nature finds fullest expression. In these there is a simplicity, a reality, a pathos of expression all too rare in verse of this order.

W. GARRETT HORDER.

INTRODUCTION

THE edition of my poems published in 1857 contained the following note by way of preface:—

'In these volumes, for the first time, a complete collection of my poetical writings has been made. While it is satisfactory to know that these scattered children of my brain have found a home, I cannot but regret that I have been unable, by reason of illness, to give that attention to their revision and arrangement which respect for the opinions of others and my own afterthought and experience demand.

'That there are pieces in this collection which I would "willingly let die," I am free to confess. But it is now too late to disown them, and I must submit to the inevitable penalty of poetical as well as other sins. There are others, intimately connected with the author's life and times, which owe their tenacity of vitality to the circumstances under which they were written, and the events by which they were suggested.

'The long poem of "Mogg Megone" was in a great measure composed in early life; and it is scarcely necessary to say that its subject is not such as the writer would have chosen at any subsequent period.'

After a lapse of thirty years since the above was written, I have been requested by my publishers to make some preparation for a new and revised edition of my poems. I cannot flatter myself that I have added much to the interest of the work beyond the correction of my own errors and those of the press, with the addition of a few heretofore unpublished pieces, and occasional notes of explanation which seemed necessary. I have made an attempt to classify the poems under a few general heads, and have transferred the long poem of 'Mogg Megone' to the Appendix, with other specimens of my earlier writings. I have endeavored to affix the dates of composition or publication as far as possible.

In looking over these poems I have not been unmindful of occasional prosaic lines and verbal infelicities, but at this late day I have neither strength nor patience to undertake their correction.

Perhaps a word of explanation may be needed in regard to a class of poems written between the years 1832 and 1865. Of their defects from an artistic point of view it is not necessary to speak. They were the earnest and often vehement expression of the writer's thought and feeling at critical periods in the great conflict between Freedom and Slavery. They were written with no expectation that they would survive the occasions which called them forth: they were protests, alarm signals, trumpet-calls to action, words wrung from the writer's heart, forged at white heat, and of course lacking the finish and careful word-selection which reflection and patient brooding over them might have given. Such as they are, they belong to the history of the Anti-Slavery movement, and may serve as way-marks of its progress. If their language at times seems severe and harsh, the monstrous wrong of Slavery which provoked it must be its excuse, if any is needed. In attacking it, we did not measure our words. 'It is,' said Garrison, 'a waste of politeness to be courteous to the devil.' But in truth the contest was, in a great measure, an impersonal one,—hatred of slavery and not of slave-masters.

> 'No common wrong provoked our zeal,
> The silken gauntlet which is thrown
> In such a quarrel rings like steel.'

Even Thomas Jefferson, in his terrible denunciation of Slavery in the *Notes on Virginia*, says: 'It is impossible to be temperate and pursue the subject of Slavery.'

After the great contest was over, no class of the American people were more ready, with kind words and deprecation of harsh retaliation, to welcome back the revolted States than the Abolitionists; and none have since more heartily rejoiced at the fast increasing prosperity of the South.

Grateful for the measure of favor which has been accorded to my writings, I leave this edition with the public. It contains all that I care to republish, and some things which, had the matter of choice been left solely to myself, I should have omitted.

J. G. W.

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POEMS

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

PROEM.

[Written to introduce the first general collection of Whittier's Poems.]

I LOVE the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky.

The rigor of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labor's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

O Freedom! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine!

Amesbury, 11*th mo.*, 1847.

Narrative and Legendary Poems

THE VAUDOIS TEACHER.

This poem was suggested by the account given of the manner in which the Waldenses disseminated their principles among the Catholic gentry. They gained access to the house through their occupation as peddlers of silks, jewels, and trinkets. 'Having disposed of some of their goods,' it is said by a writer who quotes the inquisitor Rainerus Sacco, 'they cautiously intimated that they had commodities far more valuable than these, inestimable jewels, which they would show if they could be protected from the clergy. They would then give their purchasers a Bible or Testament; and thereby many were deluded into heresy.'

The poem, under the title *Le Colporteur Vaudois*, was translated into French by Professor G. de Felice, of Montauban, and further naturalized by Professor Alexandre Rodolphe Vinet, who quoted it in his lectures on French literature, afterwards published. It became familiar in this form to the Waldenses, who adopted it as a household poem. An American clergyman, J. C. Fletcher, frequently heard it when he was a student, about the year 1850, in the theological seminary at Geneva, Switzerland, but the authorship of the poem was unknown to those who used it. Twenty-five years later, Mr. Fletcher, learning the name of the author, wrote to the moderator of the Waldensian synod at La Tour, giving the information. At the banquet which closed the meeting of the synod, the moderator announced the fact, and was instructed in the name of the Waldensian church to write to me a letter of thanks. My letter, written in reply, was translated into Italian and printed throughout Italy.

'O LADY fair, these silks of mine are
beautiful and rare,—
The richest web of the Indian loom,
which beauty's queen might wear;
And my pearls are pure as thy own fair
neck, with whose radiant light they
vie;
I have brought them with me a weary
way,—will my gentle lady buy?'

The lady smiled on the worn old man
through the dark and clustering
curls
Which veiled her brow, as she bent to view
his silks and glittering pearls;
And she placed their price in the old man's
hand and lightly turned away,
But she paused at the wanderer's earnest
call,—'My gentle lady, stay!

'O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a
purer lustre flings,
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled
crown on the lofty brow of kings;
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,
whose virtue shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and
a blessing on thy way!'

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel
where her form of grace was seen,
Where her eye shone clear, and her dark
locks waved their clasping pearls
between;
'Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth,
thou traveller gray and old,
And name the price of thy precious gem,
and my page shall count thy gold.'

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow,
as a small and meagre book,
Unchased with gold or gem of cost, from
his folding robe he took!

'Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price, may
it prove as such to thee!
Nay, keep thy gold—I ask it not, for the
word of God is free!'

The hoary traveller went his way, but the
gift he left behind
Hath had its pure and perfect work on
that highborn maiden's mind,
And she hath turned from the pride of sin
to the lowliness of truth,
And given her human heart to God in its
beautiful hour of youth!

And she hath left the gray old halls, where
an evil faith had power,
The courtly knights of her father's train,
and the maidens of her bower;
And she hath gone to the Vaudois vales
by lordly feet untrod,
Where the poor and needy of earth are
rich in the perfect love of God!

1830.

THE FEMALE MARTYR.

Mary G——, aged eighteen, a 'Sister of Charity,' died in one of our Atlantic cities, during the prevalence of the Indian cholera, while in voluntary attendance upon the sick.

'BRING out your dead!' The midnight
street
Heard and gave back the hoarse, low
call;
Harsh fell the tread of hasty feet,
Glanced through the dark the coarse white
sheet,
Her coffin and her pall.
'What—only one!' the brutal hack-man
said,
As, with an oath, he spurned away the
dead.

How sunk the inmost hearts of all,
As rolled that dead-cart slowly by,
With creaking wheel and harsh hoof-
fall!
The dying turned him to the wall,
To hear it and to die!

Onward it rolled; while oft its driver
stayed,
And hoarsely clamored, 'Ho! bring out
your dead.'

It paused beside the burial-place;
'Toss in your load!' and it was done.
With quick hand and averted face,
Hastily to the grave's embrace
They cast them, one by one,
Stranger and friend, the evil and the just,
Together trodden in the churchyard dust!

And thou, young martyr! thou wast there;
No white-robed sisters round thee trod,
Nor holy hymn, nor funeral prayer
Rose through the damp and noisome air,
Giving thee to thy God;
Nor flower, nor cross, nor hallowed taper
gave
Grace to the dead, and beauty to the
grave.

Yet, gentle sufferer! there shall be,
In every heart of kindly feeling,
A rite as holy paid to thee
As if beneath the convent-tree
Thy sisterhood were kneeling,
At vesper hours, like sorrowing angels,
keeping
Their tearful watch around thy place of
sleeping.

For thou wast one in whom the light
Of Heaven's own love was kindled well;
Enduring with a martyr's might,
Through weary day and wakeful night,
Far more than words may tell:
Gentle, and meek, and lowly, and un-
known,
Thy mercies measured by thy God alone!

Where manly hearts were failing, where
The throngful street grew foul with
death,
O high-souled martyr! thou wast there,
Inhaling, from the loathsome air,
Poison with every breath.
Yet shrinking not from offices of dread
For the wrung dying, and the unconscious
dead.

And, where the sickly taper shed
Its light through vapors, damp, confined,
Hushed as a seraph's fell thy tread,
A new Electra by the bed
Of suffering human-kind!
Pointing the spirit, in its dark dismay,
To that pure hope which fadeth not away.

Innocent teacher of the high
And holy mysteries of Heaven!
How turned to thee each glazing eye,
In mute and awful sympathy,
As thy low prayers were given;
And the o'er-hovering Spoiler wore, the while,
An angel's features, a deliverer's smile!

A blessed task! and worthy one
Who, turning from the world, as thou,
Before life's pathway had begun
To leave its spring-time flower and sun,
Had sealed her early vow;
Giving to God her beauty and her youth,
Her pure affections and her guileless truth.

Earth may not claim thee. Nothing here
Could be for thee a meet reward;
Thine is a treasure far more dear:
Eye hath not seen it, nor the ear
Of living mortal heard
The joys prepared, the promised bliss above,
The holy presence of Eternal Love!

Sleep on in peace. The earth has not
A nobler name than thine shall be.
The deeds by martial manhood wrought,
The lofty energies of thought,
The fire of poesy,
These have but frail and fading honors; thine
Shall Time unto Eternity consign.

Yea, and when thrones shall crumble down,
And human pride and grandeur fall,
The herald's line of long renown,
The mitre and the kingly crown,—
Perishing glories all!
The pure devotion of thy generous heart
Shall live in Heaven, of which it was a part.

1833.

EXTRACT FROM 'A NEW ENGLAND LEGEND.'

Originally a part of the author's *Moll Pitcher.*

How has New England's romance fled,
Even as a vision of the morning!
Its rites foredone, its guardians dead,
Its priestesses, bereft of dread,
Waking the veriest urchin's scorning!
Gone like the Indian wizard's yell
And fire-dance round the magic rock,
Forgotten like the Druid's spell
At moonrise by his holy oak!
No more along the shadowy glen
Glide the dim ghosts of murdered men;
No more the unquiet churchyard dead
Glimpse upward from their turfy bed,
Startling the traveller, late and lone;
As, on some night of starless weather,
They silently commune together,
Each sitting on his own head-stone!
The roofless house, decayed, deserted,
Its living tenants all departed,
No longer rings with midnight revel
Of witch, or ghost, or goblin evil;
No pale blue flame sends out its flashes
Through creviced roof and shattered sashes!
The witch-grass round the hazel spring
May sharply to the night-air sing,
But there no more shall withered hags
Refresh at ease their broomstick nags,
Or taste those hazel-shadowed waters
As beverage meet for Satan's daughters;
No more their mimic tones be heard,
The mew of cat, the chirp of bird,
Shrill blending with the hoarser laughter
Of the fell demon following after!
The cautious goodman nails no more
A horseshoe on his outer door,
Lest some unseemly hag should fit
To his own mouth her bridle-bit;
The goodwife's churn no more refuses
Its wonted culinary uses
Until, with heated needle burned,
The witch has to her place returned!
Our witches are no longer old
And wrinkled beldames, Satan-sold,
But young and gay and laughing creatures,

With the heart's sunshine on their features;
Their sorcery—the light which dances
Where the raised lid unveils its glances;
Or that low-breathed and gentle tone,
The music of Love's twilight hours,
Soft, dream-like, as a fairy's moan
Above her nightly closing flowers,
Sweeter than that which sighed of yore
Along the charmed Ausonian shore!
Even she, our own weird heroine,
Sole Pythoness of ancient Lynn,[1]
Sleeps calmly where the living laid her;
And the wide realm of sorcery,
Left by its latest mistress free,
Hath found no gray and skilled invader.
So perished Albion's 'glammarye,'
With him in Melrose Abbey sleeping,
His charmed torch beside his knee,
That even the dead himself might see
The magic scroll within his keeping.
And now our modern Yankee sees
Nor omens, spells, nor mysteries;
And naught above, below, around,
Of life or death, of sight or sound,
Whate'er its nature, form, or look,
Excites his terror or surprise,—
All seeming to his knowing eyes
Familiar as his 'catechise,'
Or 'Webster's Spelling-Book.'

1833.

THE DEMON OF THE STUDY.

The Brownie sits in the Scotchman's room,
And eats his meat and drinks his ale,
And beats the maid with her unused broom,
And the lazy lout with his idle flail;
But he sweeps the floor and threshes the corn,
And hies him away ere the break of dawn.

The shade of Denmark fled from the sun,
And the Cocklane ghost from the barn-loft cheer,
The fiend of Faust was a faithful one,
Agrippa's demon wrought in fear,
And the devil of Martin Luther sat
By the stout monk's side in social chat.

The Old Man of the Sea, on the neck of him
Who seven times crossed the deep,
Twined closely each lean and withered limb,
Like the nightmare in one's sleep.
But he drank of the wine, and Sindbad cast
The evil weight from his back at last.

But the demon that cometh day by day
To my quiet room and fireside nook,
Where the casement light falls dim and gray
On faded painting and ancient book,
Is a sorrier one than any whose names
Are chronicled well by good King James.

No bearer of burdens like Caliban,
No runner of errands like Ariel,
He comes in the shape of a fat old man,
Without rap of knuckle or pull of bell;
And whence he comes, or whither he goes,
I know as I do of the wind which blows.

A stout old man with a greasy hat
Slouched heavily down to his dark, red nose,
And two gray eyes enveloped in fat,
Looking through glasses with iron bows.
Read ye, and heed ye, and ye who can,
Guard well your doors from that old man!

He comes with a careless 'How d' ye do?'
And seats himself in my elbow-chair;
And my morning paper and pamphlet new
Fall forthwith under his special care,
And he wipes his glasses and clears his throat,
And, button by button, unfolds his coat.

And then he reads from paper and book,
In a low and husky asthmatic tone,
With the stolid sameness of posture and look
Of one who reads to himself alone;
And hour after hour on my senses come
That husky wheeze and that dolorous hum.

The price of stocks, the auction sales,
The poet's song and the lover's glee,
The horrible murders, the seaboard gales,
The marriage list, and the *jeu d'esprit*,

All reach my ear in the self-same tone,—
I shudder at each, but the fiend reads on!

Oh, sweet as the lapse of water at noon
O'er the mossy roots of some forest tree,
The sigh of the wind in the woods of June,
Or sound of flutes o'er a moonlight sea,
Or the low soft music, perchance, which seems
To float through the slumbering singer's dreams,

So sweet, so dear is the silvery tone,
Of her in whose features I sometimes look,
As I sit at eve by her side alone,
And we read by turns, from the self-same book,
Some tale perhaps of the olden time,
Some lover's romance or quaint old rhyme.

Then when the story is one of woe,—
Some prisoner's plaint through his dungeon-bar,
Her blue eye glistens with tears, and low
Her voice sinks down like a moan afar;
And I seem to hear that prisoner's wail,
And his face looks on me worn and pale.

And when she reads some merrier song,
Her voice is glad as an April bird's,
And when the tale is of war and wrong,
A trumpet's summons is in her words,
And the rush of the hosts I seem to hear,
And see the tossing of plume and spear!

Oh, pity me then, when, day by day,
The stout fiend darkens my parlor door;
And reads me perchance the self-same lay
Which melted in music, the night before,
From lips as the lips of Hylas sweet,
And moved like twin roses which zephyrs meet!

I cross my floor with a nervous tread,
I whistle and laugh and sing and shout,
I flourish my cane above his head,
And stir up the fire to roast him out;
I topple the chairs, and drum on the pane,
And press my hands on my ears, in vain!

I've studied Glanville and James the wise,
And wizard black-letter tomes which treat
Of demons of every name and size
Which a Christian man is presumed to meet,
But never a hint and never a line
Can I find of a reading fiend like mine.

I've crossed the Psalter with Brady and Tate,
And laid the Primer above them all,
I've nailed a horseshoe over the grate,
And hung a wig to my parlor wall
Once worn by a learned Judge, they say,
At Salem court in the witchcraft day!

'*Conjuro te, sceleratissime,*
Abire ad tuum locum!'—still
Like a visible nightmare he sits by me,—
The exorcism has lost its skill;
And I hear again in my haunted room
The husky wheeze and the dolorous hum!

Ah! commend me to Mary Magdalen
With her sevenfold plagues, to the wandering Jew,
To the terrors which haunted Orestes when
The furies his midnight curtains drew,
But charm him off, ye who charm him can,
That reading demon, that fat old man!

1835.

THE FOUNTAIN.

On the declivity of a hill in Salisbury, Essex County, is a fountain of clear water, gushing from the very roots of a venerable oak. It is about two miles from the junction of the Powow River with the Merrimac.

TRAVELLER! on thy journey toiling
By the swift Powow,
With the summer sunshine falling
On thy heated brow,
Listen, while all else is still,
To the brooklet from the hill.

Wild and sweet the flowers are blowing
By that streamlet's side,
And a greener verdure showing
Where its waters glide,

Down the hill-slope murmuring on,
Over root and mossy stone.

Where yon oak his broad arms flingeth
O'er the sloping hill,
Beautiful and freshly springeth
That soft-flowing rill,
Through its dark roots wreathed and bare,
Gushing up to sun and air.

Brighter waters sparkled never
In that magic well,
Of whose gift of life forever
Ancient legends tell,
In the lonely desert wasted,
And by mortal lip untasted.

Waters which the proud Castilian
Sought with longing eyes,
Underneath the bright pavilion
Of the Indian skies,
Where his forest pathway lay
Through the blooms of Florida.

Years ago a lonely stranger,
With the dusky brow
Of the outcast forest-ranger,
Crossed the swift Powow,
And betook him to the rill
And the oak upon the hill.

O'er his face of moody sadness
For an instant shone
Something like a gleam of gladness,
As he stooped him down
To the fountain's grassy side,
And his eager thirst supplied.

With the oak its shadow throwing
O'er his mossy seat,
And the cool, sweet waters flowing
Softly at his feet,
Closely by the fountain's rim
That lone Indian seated him.

Autumn's earliest frost had given
To the woods below
Hues of beauty, such as heaven
Lendeth to its bow;
And the soft breeze from the west
Scarcely broke their dreamy rest.

Far behind was Ocean striving
With his chains of sand;
Southward, sunny glimpses giving,
'Twixt the swells of land,
Of its calm and silvery track,
Rolled the tranquil Merrimac.

Over village, wood, and meadow
Gazed that stranger man,
Sadly, till the twilight shadow
Over all things ran,
Save where spire and westward pane
Flashed the sunset back again.

Gazing thus upon the dwelling
Of his warrior sires,
Where no lingering trace was telling
Of their wigwam fires,
Who the gloomy thoughts might know
Of that wandering child of woe?

Naked lay, in sunshine glowing,
Hills that once had stood
Down their sides the shadows throwing
Of a mighty wood,
Where the deer his covert kept,
And the eagle's pinion swept!

Where the birch canoe had glided
Down the swift Powow,
Dark and gloomy bridges strided
Those clear waters now;
And where once the beaver swam,
Jarred the wheel and frowned the dam.

For the wood-bird's merry singing,
And the hunter's cheer,
Iron clang and hammer's ringing
Smote upon his ear;
And the thick and sullen smoke
From the blackened forges broke.

Could it be his fathers ever
Loved to linger here?
These bare hills, this conquered river,—
Could they hold them dear,
With their native loveliness
Tamed and tortured into this?

Sadly, as the shades of even
Gathered o'er the hill,
While the western half of heaven
Blushed with sunset still,

From the fountain's mossy seat
Turned the Indian's weary feet.

Year on year hath flown forever,
But he came no more
To the hillside on the river
Where he came before.
But the villager can tell
Of that strange man's visit well.

And the merry children, laden
With their fruits or flowers,—
Roving boy and laughing maiden,
In their school-day hours,
Love the simple tale to tell
Of the Indian and his well.

1837.

PENTUCKET.

The village of Haverhill, on the Merrimac, called by the Indians Pentucket, was for nearly seventeen years a frontier town, and during thirty years endured all the horrors of savage warfare. In the year 1708, a combined body of French and Indians, under the command of De Chaillons, and Hertel de Rouville, the infamous and bloody sacker of Deerfield, made an attack upon the village, which at that time contained only thirty houses. Sixteen of the villagers were massacred, and a still larger number made prisoners. About thirty of the enemy also fell, and among them Hertel de Rouville. The minister of the place, Benjamin Rolfe, was killed by a shot through his own door. In a paper entitled *The Border War of* 1708, published in my collection of *Recreations and Miscellanies*, I have given a prose narrative of the surprise of Haverhill.

How sweetly on the wood-girt town
The mellow light of sunset shone!
Each small, bright lake, whose waters still
Mirror the forest and the hill,
Reflected from its waveless breast
The beauty of a cloudless west,
Glorious as if a glimpse were given
Within the western gates of heaven,
Left, by the spirit of the star
Of sunset's holy hour, ajar!

Beside the river's tranquil flood
The dark and low-walled dwellings stood,
Where many a rood of open land
Stretched up and down on either hand,
With corn-leaves waving freshly green
The thick and blackened stumps between.
Behind, unbroken, deep and dread,
The wild, untravelled forest spread,
Back to those mountains, white and cold,
Of which the Indian trapper told,
Upon whose summits never yet
Was mortal foot in safety set.

Quiet and calm without a fear,
Of danger darkly lurking near,
The weary laborer left his plough,
The milkmaid carolled by her cow;
From cottage door and household hearth
Rose songs of praise, or tones of mirth.
At length the murmur died away,
And silence on that village lay.
—So slept Pompeii, tower and hall,
Ere the quick earthquake swallowed all,
Undreaming of the fiery fate
Which made its dwellings desolate!

Hours passed away. By moonlight sped
The Merrimac along his bed.
Bathed in the pallid lustre, stood
Dark cottage-wall and rock and wood,
Silent, beneath that tranquil beam,
As the hushed grouping of a dream.
Yet on the still air crept a sound,
No bark of fox, nor rabbit's bound,
Nor stir of wings, nor waters flowing,
Nor leaves in midnight breezes blowing.

Was that the tread of many feet,
Which downward from the hillside beat?
What forms were those which darkly stood
Just on the margin of the wood?
Charred tree-stumps in the moonlight dim,
Or paling rude, or leafless limb?
No,—through the trees fierce eyeballs glowed,
Dark human forms in moonshine showed,
Wild from their native wilderness,
With painted limbs and battle-dress!

A yell the dead might wake to hear
Swelled on the night air, far and clear;
Then smote the Indian tomahawk
On crashing door and shattering lock;
Then rang the rifle-shot, and then
The shrill death-scream of stricken men,—

Sank the red axe in woman's brain,
And childhood's cry arose in vain.
Bursting through roof and window came,
Red, fast, and fierce, the kindled flame,
And blended fire and moonlight glared
On still dead men and scalp-knives bared.

The morning sun looked brightly through
The river willows, wet with dew.
No sound of combat filled the air,
No shout was heard, nor gunshot there;
Yet still the thick and sullen smoke
From smouldering ruins slowly broke;
And on the greensward many a stain,
And, here and there, the mangled slain,
Told how that midnight bolt had sped
Pentucket, on thy fated head!

Even now the villager can tell
Where Rolfe beside his hearthstone fell,
Still show the door of wasting oak,
Through which the fatal death-shot broke,
And point the curious stranger where
De Rouville's corse lay grim and bare;
Whose hideous head, in death still feared,
Bore not a trace of hair or beard;
And still, within the churchyard ground,
Heaves darkly up the ancient mound,
Whose grass-grown surface overlies
The victims of that sacrifice.

1838.

THE NORSEMEN.

In the early part of the present century, a fragment of a statue, rudely chiselled from dark gray stone, was found in the town of Bradford, on the Merrimac. Its origin must be left entirely to conjecture. The fact that the ancient Northmen visited the northeast coast of North America and probably New England, some centuries before the discovery of the western world by Columbus, is now very generally admitted.

Gift from the cold and silent Past!
A relic to the present cast,
Left on the ever-changing strand
Of shifting and unstable sand,
Which wastes beneath the steady chime
And beating of the waves of Time!
Who from its bed of primal rock
First wrenched thy dark, unshapely block?
Whose hand, of curious skill untaught,
Thy rude and savage outline wrought?

The waters of my native stream
Are glancing in the sun's warm beam;
From sail-urged keel and flashing oar
The circles widen to its shore;
And cultured field and peopled town
Slope to its willowed margin down.
Yet, while this morning breeze is bringing
The home-life sound of school-bells ringing,
And rolling wheel, and rapid jar
Of the fire-winged and steedless car,
And voices from the wayside near
Come quick and blended on my ear,—
A spell is in this old gray stone,
My thoughts are with the Past alone!

A change!—The steepled town no more
Stretches along the sail-thronged shore;
Like palace-domes in sunset's cloud,
Fade sun-gilt spire and mansion proud:
Spectrally rising where they stood,
I see the old, primeval wood;
Dark, shadow-like, on either hand
I see its solemn waste expand;
It climbs the green and cultured hill,
It arches o'er the valley's rill,
And leans from cliff and crag to throw
Its wild arms o'er the stream below.
Unchanged, alone, the same bright river
Flows on, as it will flow forever!
I listen, and I hear the low
Soft ripple where its waters go;
I hear behind the panther's cry,
The wild-bird's scream goes thrilling by,
And shyly on the river's brink
The deer is stooping down to drink.

But hark!—from wood and rock flung back,
What sound comes up the Merrimac?
What sea-worn barks are those which throw
The light spray from each rushing prow?
Have they not in the North Sea's blast
Bowed to the waves the straining mast?
Their frozen sails the low, pale sun
Of Thulë's night has shone upon;
Flapped by the sea-wind's gusty sweep
Round icy drift, and headland steep.
Wild Jutland's wives and Lochlin's daughters
Have watched them fading o'er the waters,

Lessening through driving mist and spray,
Like white-winged sea-birds on their way!

Onward they glide,—and now I view
Their iron-armed and stalwart crew;
Joy glistens in each wild blue eye,
Turned to green earth and summer sky.
Each broad, seamed breast has cast aside
Its cumbering vest of shaggy hide;
Bared to the sun and soft warm air,
Streams back the Northmen's yellow hair.
I see the gleam of axe and spear,
A sound of smitten shields I hear,
Keeping a harsh and fitting time
To Saga's chant, and Runic rhyme;
Such lays as Zetland's Scald has sung,
His gray and naked isles among;
Or muttered low at midnight hour
Round Odin's mossy stone of power.
The wolf beneath the Arctic moon
Has answered to that startling rune;
The Gael has heard its stormy swell,
The light Frank knows its summons well;
Iona's sable-stoled Culdee
Has heard it sounding o'er the sea,
And swept, with hoary beard and hair,
His altar's foot in trembling prayer!

'T is past,—the 'wildering vision dies
In darkness on my dreaming eyes!
The forest vanishes in air,
Hill-slope and vale lie starkly bare;
I hear the common tread of men,
And hum of work-day life again;
The mystic relic seems alone
A broken mass of common stone·
And if it be the chiselled limb
Of Berserker or idol grim,
A fragment of Valhalla's Thor,
The stormy Viking's god of War,
Or Praga of the Runic lay,
Or love-awakening Siona,
I know not,—for no graven line,
Nor Druid mark, nor Runic sign,
Is left me here, by which to trace
Its name, or origin, or place.
Yet, for this vision of the Past,
This glance upon its darkness cast,
My spirit bows in gratitude
Before the Giver of all good,
Who fashioned so the human mind,
That from the waste of Time behind,
A simple stone, or mound of earth,
Can summon the departed forth;
Quicken the Past to life again,
The Present lose in what hath been,
And in their primal freshness show
The buried forms of long ago.
As if a portion of that Thought
By which the Eternal will is wrought,
Whose impulse fills anew with breath
The frozen solitude of Death,
To mortal mind were sometimes lent,
To mortal musings sometimes sent,
To whisper—even when it seems
But Memory's fantasy of dreams—
Through the mind's waste of woe and sin,
Of an immortal origin!

1841.

FUNERAL TREE OF THE SOKOKIS.

Polan, chief of the Sokokis Indians of the country between Agamenticus and Casco Bay, was killed at Windham on Sebago Lake in the spring of 1756. After the whites had retired, the surviving Indians 'swayed' or bent down a young tree until its roots were upturned, placed the body of their chief beneath it, and then released the tree, which, in springing back to its old position, covered the grave. The Sokokis were early converts to the Catholic faith. Most of them, prior to the year 1756, had removed to the French settlements on the St. François.

AROUND Sebago's lonely lake
There lingers not a breeze to break
The mirror which its waters make.

The solemn pines along its shore,
The firs which hang its gray rocks o'er,
Are painted on its glassy floor.

The sun looks o'er, with hazy eye,
The snowy mountain-tops which lie
Piled coldly up against the sky.

Dazzling and white! save where the bleak,
Wild winds have bared some splintering peak,
Or snow-slide left its dusky streak.

Yet green are Saco's banks below,
And belts of spruce and cedar show,
Dark fringing round those cones of snow.

The earth hath felt the breath of spring,
Though yet on her deliverer's wing
The lingering frosts of winter cling.

Fresh grasses fringe the meadow-brooks,
And mildly from its sunny nooks
The blue eye of the violet looks.

And odors from the springing grass,
The sweet birch and the sassafras,
Upon the scarce-felt breezes pass.

Her tokens of renewing care
Hath Nature scattered everywhere,
In bud and flower, and warmer air.

But in their hour of bitterness,
What reck the broken Sokokis,
Beside their slaughtered chief, of this?

The turf's red stain is yet undried,
Scarce have the death-shot echoes died
Along Sebago's wooded side;

And silent now the hunters stand,
Grouped darkly, where a swell of land
Slopes upward from the lake's white sand.

Fire and the axe have swept it bare,
Save one lone beech, unclosing there
Its light leaves in the vernal air.

With grave, cold looks, all sternly mute,
They break the damp turf at its foot,
And bare its coiled and twisted root.

They heave the stubborn trunk aside,
The firm roots from the earth divide,—
The rent beneath yawns dark and wide.

And there the fallen chief is laid,
In tasselled garb of skins arrayed,
And girded with his wampum-braid.

The silver cross he loved is pressed
Beneath the heavy arms, which rest
Upon his scarred and naked breast.

'T is done: the roots are backward sent,
The beechen-tree stands up unbent,
The Indian's fitting monument!

When of that sleeper's broken race
Their green and pleasant dwelling-place,
Which knew them once, retains no trace;

Oh, long may sunset's light be shed
As now upon that beech's head,
A green memorial of the dead!

There shall his fitting requiem be,
In northern winds, that, cold and free,
Howl nightly in that funeral tree.

To their wild wail the waves which break
Forever round that lonely lake
A solemn undertone shall make!

And who shall deem the spot unblest,
Where Nature's younger children rest,
Lulled on their sorrowing mother's breast?

Deem ye that mother loveth less
These bronzed forms of the wilderness
She foldeth in her long caress?

As sweet o'er them her wild-flowers blow,
As if with fairer hair and brow
The blue-eyed Saxon slept below.

What though the places of their rest
No priestly knee hath ever pressed,—
No funeral rite nor prayer hath blessed?

What though the bigot's ban be there,
And thoughts of wailing and despair,
And cursing in the place of prayer!

Yet Heaven hath angels watching round
The Indian's lowliest forest-mound,—
And they have made it holy ground.

There ceases man's frail judgment; all
His powerless bolts of cursing fall
Unheeded on that grassy pall.

O peeled and hunted and reviled,
Sleep on, dark tenant of the wild!
Great Nature owns her simple child!

And Nature's God, to whom alone
The secret of the heart is known,—
The hidden language traced thereon;

Who from its many cumberings
Of form and creed, and outward things,
To light the naked spirit brings;

Not with our partial eye shall scan,
Not with our pride and scorn shall ban,
The spirit of our brother man!

1841.

ST. JOHN.

The fierce rivalry between Charles de La Tour, a Protestant, and D'Aulnay Charnasy, a Catholic, for the possession of Acadia, forms one of the most romantic passages in the history of the New World. La Tour received aid in several instances from the Puritan colony of Massachusetts. During one of his voyages for the purpose of obtaining arms and provisions for his establishment at St. John, his castle was attacked by D'Aulnay, and successfully defended by its high-spirited mistress. A second attack however followed in the fourth month, 1647, when D'Aulnay was successful, and the garrison was put to the sword. Lady La Tour languished a few days in the hands of her enemy, and then died of grief[2].

'To the winds give our banner!
Bear homeward again!'
Cried the Lord of Acadia,
Cried Charles of Estienne!
From the prow of his shallop
He gazed, as the sun,
From its bed in the ocean,
Streamed up the St. John.

O'er the blue western waters
That shallop had passed,
Where the mists of Penobscot
Clung damp on her mast.
St. Saviour had looked
On the heretic sail,
As the songs of the Huguenot
Rose on the gale.

The pale, ghostly fathers
Remembered her well,
And had cursed her while passing,
With taper and bell;
But the men of Monhegan,
Of Papists abhorred,
Had welcomed and feasted
The heretic Lord.

They had loaded his shallop
With dun-fish and ball,
With stores for his larder,
And steel for his wall.
Pemaquid, from her bastions
And turrets of stone,
Had welcomed his coming
With banner and gun.

And the prayers of the elders
Had followed his way,
As homeward he glided,
Down Pentecost Bay.
Oh, well sped La Tour!
For, in peril and pain,
His lady kept watch,
For his coming again.

O'er the Isle of the Pheasant
The morning sun shone,
On the plane-trees which shaded
The shores of St. John.
'Now, why from yon battlements
Speaks not my love!
Why waves there no banner
My fortress above?'

Dark and wild, from his deck
St. Estienne gazed about,
On fire-wasted dwellings,
And silent redoubt;
From the low, shattered walls
Which the flame had o'errun,
There floated no banner,
There thundered no gun!

But beneath the low arch
Of its doorway there stood
A pale priest of Rome,
In his cloak and his hood.
With the bound of a lion,
La Tour sprang to land,
On the throat of the Papist
He fastened his hand.

'Speak, son of the Woman
Of scarlet and sin!
What wolf has been prowling
My castle within?'
From the grasp of the soldier
The Jesuit broke,
Half in scorn, half in sorrow,
He smiled as he spoke:

'No wolf, Lord of Estienne,
Has ravaged thy hall,
But thy red-handed rival,
With fire, steel, and ball!
On an errand of mercy
I hitherward came,
While the walls of thy castle
Yet spouted with flame.

'Pentagoet's dark vessels
Were moored in the bay,
Grim sea-lions, roaring
Aloud for their prey.'
'But what of my lady?'
Cried Charles of Estienne.
'On the shot-crumbled turret
Thy lady was seen:

'Half-veiled in the smoke-cloud,
Her hand grasped thy pennon,
While her dark tresses swayed
In the hot breath of cannon!
But woe to the heretic,
Evermore woe!
When the son of the church
And the cross is his foe!

'In the track of the shell,
In the path of the ball,
Pentagoet swept over
The breach of the wall!
Steel to steel, gun to gun,
One moment,—and then
Alone stood the victor,
Alone with his men!

'Of its sturdy defenders,
Thy lady alone
Saw the cross-blazoned banner
Float over St. John.'
'Let the dastard look to it!'
Cried fiery Estienne,
'Were D'Aulnay King Louis,
I'd free her again!'

'Alas for thy lady!
No service from thee
Is needed by her
Whom the Lord hath set free;
Nine days, in stern silence,
Her thraldom she bore,
But the tenth morning came,
And Death opened her door!'

As if suddenly smitten
La Tour staggered back;
His hand grasped his sword-hilt,
His forehead grew black.
He sprang on the deck
Of his shallop again.
'We cruise now for vengeance!
Give way!' cried Estienne.

'Massachusetts shall hear
Of the Huguenot's wrong,
And from island and creekside
Her fishers shall throng!
Pentagoet shall rue
What his Papists have done,
When his palisades echo
The Puritan's gun!'

Oh, the loveliest of heavens
Hung tenderly o'er him,
There were waves in the sunshine,
And green isles before him;
But a pale hand was beckoning
The Huguenot on;
And in blackness and ashes
Behind was St. John!

1841.

THE CYPRESS-TREE OF CEYLON.

Ibn Batuta, the celebrated Mussulman traveller of the fourteenth century, speaks of a cypress-tree in Ceylon, universally held sacred by the natives, the leaves of which were said to fall only at certain intervals, and he who had the happiness to find and eat one of them was restored, at once, to youth and vigor. The traveller saw several venerable Jogees, or saints, sitting silent and motionless under the tree, patiently awaiting the falling of a leaf.

They sat in silent watchfulness
The sacred cypress-tree about,
And, from beneath old wrinkled brows,
Their failing eyes looked out.

Gray Age and Sickness waiting there
Through weary night and lingering day,—
Grim as the idols at their side,
And motionless as they.

Unheeded in the boughs above
The song of Ceylon's birds was sweet;
Unseen of them the island flowers
Bloomed brightly at their feet.

O'er them the tropic night-storm swept,
The thunder crashed on rock and hill;
The cloud-fire on their eyeballs blazed,
Yet there they waited still!

What was the world without to them?
The Moslem's sunset-call, the dance
Of Ceylon's maids, the passing gleam
Of battle-flag and lance?

They waited for that falling leaf
Of which the wandering Jogees sing:
Which lends once more to wintry age
The greenness of its spring.

Oh, if these poor and blinded ones
In trustful patience wait to feel
O'er torpid pulse and failing limb
A youthful freshness steal;

Shall we, who sit beneath that Tree
Whose healing leaves of life are shed,
In answer to the breath of prayer,
Upon the waiting head—

Not to restore our failing forms,
And build the spirit's broken shrine,
But on the fainting soul to shed
A light and life divine—

Shall we grow weary in our watch,
And murmur at the long delay?
Impatient of our Father's time
And His appointed way?

Or shall the stir of outward things
Allure and claim the Christian's eye,
When on the heathen watcher's ear
Their powerless murmurs die?

Alas! a deeper test of faith
Than prison cell or martyr's stake,
The self-abasing watchfulness
Of silent prayer may make.

We gird us bravely to rebuke
Our erring brother in the wrong,—
And in the ear of Pride and Power
Our warning voice is strong.

Easier to smite with Peter's sword
Than 'watch one hour' in humbling prayer.
Life's 'great things,' like the Syrian lord,
Our hearts can do and dare.

But oh! we shrink from Jordan's side,
From waters which alone can save;
And murmur for Abana's banks
And Pharpar's brighter wave.

O Thou, who in the garden's shade
Didst wake Thy weary ones again,
Who slumbered at that fearful hour
Forgetful of Thy pain;

Bend o'er us now, as over them,
And set our sleep-bound spirits free,
Nor leave us slumbering in the watch
Our souls should keep with Thee!

1841.

THE EXILES.

The incidents upon which the following ballad has its foundation occurred about the year 1660. Thomas Macy was one of the first, if not the first white settler of Nantucket. The career of Macy is briefly but carefully outlined in James S. Pike's *The New Puritan*.

THE goodman sat beside his door,
One sultry afternoon,
With his young wife singing at his side
An old and goodly tune.

A glimmer of heat was in the air,—
The dark green woods were still;
And the skirts of a heavy thunder-cloud
Hung over the western hill.

Black, thick, and vast arose that cloud
Above the wilderness,
As some dark world from upper air
Were stooping over this.

At times the solemn thunder pealed,
And all was still again,
Save a low murmur in the air
Of coming wind and rain.

Just as the first big rain-drop fell,
A weary stranger came,
And stood before the farmer's door,
With travel soiled and lame.

Sad seemed he, yet sustaining hope
Was in his quiet glance,
And peace, like autumn's moonlight, clothed
His tranquil countenance,—

A look, like that his Master wore
In Pilate's council-hall:
It told of wrongs, but of a love
Meekly forgiving all.

'Friend! wilt thou give me shelter here?'
The stranger meekly said;
And, leaning on his oaken staff,
The goodman's features read.

'My life is hunted,—evil men
Are following in my track;
The traces of the torturer's whip
Are on my aged back;

'And much, I fear, 't will peril thee
Within thy doors to take
A hunted seeker of the Truth,
Oppressed for conscience' sake.'

Oh, kindly spoke the goodman's wife,
'Come in, old man!' quoth she,
'We will not leave thee to the storm,
Whoever thou mayst be.'

Then came the aged wanderer in,
And silent sat him down;
While all within grew dark as night
Beneath the storm-cloud's frown.

But while the sudden lightning's blaze
Filled every cottage nook,
And with the jarring thunder-roll
The loosened casements shook,

A heavy tramp of horses' feet
Came sounding up the lane,
And half a score of horse, or more,
Came plunging through the rain.

'Now, Goodman Macy, ope thy door,—
We would not be house-breakers;
A rueful deed thou 'st done this day,
In harboring banished Quakers.'

Out looked the cautious goodman then,
With much of fear and awe,
For there, with broad wig drenched with rain,
The parish priest he saw.

'Open thy door, thou wicked man,
And let thy pastor in,
And give God thanks, if forty stripes
Repay thy deadly sin.'

'What seek ye?' quoth the goodman;
'The stranger is my guest;
He is worn with toil and grievous wrong,—
Pray let the old man rest.'

'Now, out upon thee, canting knave!'
And strong hands shook the door.
'Believe me, Macy,' quoth the priest,
'Thou 'lt rue thy conduct sore.'

Then kindled Macy's eye of fire:
'No priest who walks the earth,
Shall pluck away the stranger-guest
Made welcome to my hearth.'

Down from his cottage wall he caught
The matchlock, hotly tried
At Preston-pans and Marston-moor,
By fiery Ireton's side;

Where Puritan, and Cavalier,
With shout and psalm contended;
And Rupert's oath, and Cromwell's prayer,
With battle-thunder blended.

Up rose the ancient stranger then:
'My spirit is not free
To bring the wrath and violence
Of evil men on thee;

'And for thyself, I pray forbear,
Bethink thee of thy Lord,
Who healed again the smitten ear,
And sheathed His follower's sword.

'I go, as to the slaughter led.
Friends of the poor, farewell!'
Beneath his hand the oaken door
Back on its hinges fell.

'Come forth, old graybeard, yea and nay,'
The reckless scoffers cried,
As to a horseman's saddle-bow
The old man's arms were tied.

And of his bondage hard and long
In Boston's crowded jail,
Where suffering woman's prayer was heard,
With sickening childhood's wail,

It suits not with our tale to tell;
Those scenes have passed away;
Let the dim shadows of the past
Brood o'er that evil day.

'Ho, sheriff!' quoth the ardent priest,
'Take Goodman Macy too;
The sin of this day's heresy
His back or purse shall rue.'

'Now, goodwife, haste thee!' Macy cried.
She caught his manly arm;
Behind, the parson urged pursuit,
With outcry and alarm.

Ho! speed the Macys, neck or naught,—
The river-course was near;
The plashing on its pebbled shore
Was music to their ear.

A gray rock, tasselled o'er with birch,
Above the waters hung,
And at its base, with every wave,
A small light wherry swung.

A leap—they gain the boat—and there
The goodman wields his oar;
'Ill luck betide them all,' he cried,
'The laggards on the shore.'

Down through the crashing underwood,
The burly sheriff came:—
'Stand, Goodman Macy, yield thyself;
Yield in the King's own name.'

'Now out upon thy hangman's face!'
Bold Macy answered then,—
'Whip women, on the village green,
But meddle not with men.'

The priest came panting to the shore,
His grave cocked hat was gone;
Behind him, like some owl's nest, hung
His wig upon a thorn.

'Come back! come back!' the parson cried,
'The church's curse beware.'
'Curse, an' thou wilt,' said Macy, 'but
Thy blessing prithee spare.'

'Vile scoffer!' cried the baffled priest,
'Thou 'lt yet the gallows see.'
'Who's born to be hanged will not be drowned,'
Quoth Macy, merrily;

'And so, sir sheriff and priest, good-by!'
He bent him to his oar,
And the small boat glided quietly
From the twain upon the shore.

Now in the west, the heavy clouds
Scattered and fell asunder,
While feebler came the rush of rain,
And fainter growled the thunder.

And through the broken clouds, the sun
Looked out serene and warm,
Painting its holy symbol-light
Upon the passing storm.

Oh, beautiful! that rainbow span,
O'er dim Crane-neck was bended;
One bright foot touched the eastern hills,
And one with ocean blended.

By green Pentucket's southern slope
The small boat glided fast;
The watchers of the Block-house saw
The strangers as they passed.

That night a stalwart garrison
Sat shaking in their shoes,
To hear the dip of Indian oars,
The glide of birch canoes.

The fisher-wives of Salisbury—
The men were all away—
Looked out to see the stranger oar
Upon their waters play.

Deer Island's rocks and fir-trees threw
Their sunset-shadows o'er them,
And Newbury's spire and weathercock
Peered o'er the pines before them.

Around the Black Rocks, on their left,
The marsh lay broad and green;
And on their right, with dwarf shrubs crowned,
Plum Island's hills were seen.

With skilful hand and wary eye
The harbor-bar was crossed;
A plaything of the restless wave,
The boat on ocean tossed.

The glory of the sunset heaven
On land and water lay;
On the steep hills of Agawam,
On cape, and bluff, and bay.

They passed the gray rocks of Cape Ann,
And Gloucester's harbor-bar;
The watch-fire of the garrison
Shone like a setting star.

How brightly broke the morning
On Massachusetts Bay!
Blue wave, and bright green island,
Rejoicing in the day.

On passed the bark in safety
Round isle and headland steep;
No tempest broke above them,
No fog-cloud veiled the deep.

Far round the bleak and stormy Cape
The venturous Macy passed,
And on Nantucket's naked isle
Drew up his boat at last.

And how, in log-built cabin,
They braved the rough sea-weather;
And there, in peace and quietness,
Went down life's vale together;

How others drew around them,
And how their fishing sped,
Until to every wind of heaven
Nantucket's sails were spread;

How pale Want alternated
With Plenty's golden smile;
Behold, is it not written
In the annals of the isle?

And yet that isle remaineth
A refuge of the free,
As when true-hearted Macy
Beheld it from the sea.

Free as the winds that winnow
Her shrubless hills of sand,
Free as the waves that batter
Along her yielding land.

Than hers, at duty's summons,
No loftier spirit stirs,
Nor falls o'er human suffering
A readier tear than hers.

God bless the sea-beat island!
And grant forevermore,
That charity and freedom dwell
As now upon her shore!

1841.

THE KNIGHT OF ST. JOHN.

Ere down yon blue Carpathian hills
The sun shall sink again,
Farewell to life and all its ills,
Farewell to cell and chain!

These prison shades are dark and cold,
But, darker far than they,
The shadow of a sorrow old
Is on my heart alway.

For since the day when Warkworth wood
Closed o'er my steed, and I,
An alien from my name and blood,
A weed cast out to die,—

When, looking back in sunset light,
I saw her turret gleam,
And from its casement, far and white,
Her sign of farewell stream,

Like one who, from some desert shore,
Doth home's green isles descry,
And, vainly longing, gazes o'er
The waste of wave and sky;

So from the desert of my fate
I gaze across the past;
Forever on life's dial-plate
The shade is backward cast!

I've wandered wide from shore to shore,
I've knelt at many a shrine;
And bowed me to the rocky floor
Where Bethlehem's tapers shine;

And by the Holy Sepulchre
I've pledged my knightly sword
To Christ, His blessed Church, and her,
The Mother of our Lord.

Oh, vain the vow, and vain the strife!
How vain do all things seem!
My soul is in the past, and life
To-day is but a dream!

In vain the penance strange and long,
And hard for flesh to bear;
The prayer, the fasting, and the thong,
And sackcloth shirt of hair.

The eyes of memory will not sleep,—
Its ears are open still;
And vigils with the past they keep
Against my feeble will.

And still the loves and joys of old
Do evermore uprise;
I see the flow of locks of gold,
The shine of loving eyes!

Ah me! upon another's breast
Those golden locks recline;
I see upon another rest
The glance that once was mine.

'O faithless priest! O perjured knight!'
I hear the Master cry;
'Shut out the vision from thy sight,
Let Earth and Nature die.

'The Church of God is now thy spouse,
And thou the bridegroom art;
Then let the burden of thy vows
Crush down thy human heart!'

In vain! This heart its grief must know,
Till life itself hath ceased,
And falls beneath the self-same blow
The lover and the priest!

O pitying Mother! souls of light,
And saints and martyrs old!
Pray for a weak and sinful knight,
A suffering man uphold.

Then let the Paynim work his will,
And death unbind my chain,
Ere down yon blue Carpathian hill
The sun shall fall again.

1843.

CASSANDRA SOUTHWICK.

In 1658 two young persons, son and daughter of Lawrence Southwick of Salem, who had himself been imprisoned and deprived of nearly all his property for having entertained Quakers at his house, were fined for non-attendance at church. They being unable to pay the fine, the General Court issued an order empowering 'the Treasurer of the County to sell the said persons to any of the English nation of *Virginia* or *Barbadoes*, to answer said fines.' An attempt was made to carry this order into execution, but no shipmaster was found willing to convey them to the West Indies.

To the God of all sure mercies let my
blessing rise to-day,
From the scoffer and the cruel He hath
plucked the spoil away;
Yea, He who cooled the furnace around
the faithful three,
And tamed the Chaldean lions, hath set
His handmaid free!

Last night I saw the sunset melt through
my prison bars,
Last night across my damp earth-floor
fell the pale gleam of stars;
In the coldness and the darkness all
through the long night-time,
My grated casement whitened with
autumn's early rime.

Alone, in that dark sorrow, hour after
hour crept by;
Star after star looked palely in and sank
adown the sky;
No sound amid night's stillness, save that
which seemed to be
The dull and heavy beating of the pulses
of the sea;

All night I sat unsleeping, for I knew
that on the morrow
The ruler and the cruel priest would mock
me in my sorrow,

Dragged to their place of market, and bargained for and sold,
Like a lamb before the shambles, like a heifer from the fold!

Oh, the weakness of the flesh was there,—the shrinking and the shame;
And the low voice of the Tempter like whispers to me came:
'Why sit'st thou thus forlornly,' the wicked murmur said,
'Damp walls thy bower of beauty, cold earth thy maiden bed?

'Where be the smiling faces, and voices soft and sweet,
Seen in thy father's dwelling, heard in the pleasant street?
Where be the youths whose glances, the summer Sabbath through,
Turned tenderly and timidly unto thy father's pew?

'Why sit'st thou here, Cassandra?—Bethink thee with what mirth
Thy happy schoolmates gather around the warm, bright hearth;
How the crimson shadows tremble on foreheads white and fair,
On eyes of merry girlhood, half hid in golden hair.

'Not for thee the hearth-fire brightens, not for thee kind words are spoken,
Not for thee the nuts of Wenham woods by laughing boys are broken;
No first-fruits of the orchard within thy lap are laid,
For thee no flowers of autumn the youthful hunters braid.

'O weak, deluded maiden!—by crazy fancies led,
With wild and raving railers an evil path to tread;
To leave a wholesome worship, and teaching pure and sound,
And mate with maniac women, loose-haired and sackcloth bound,—

'Mad scoffers of the priesthood, who mock at things divine,
Who rail against the pulpit, and holy bread and wine;
Sore from their cart-tail scourgings, and from the pillory lame,
Rejoicing in their wretchedness, and glorying in their shame.

'And what a fate awaits thee!—a sadly toiling slave,
Dragging the slowly lengthening chain of bondage to the grave!
Think of thy woman's nature, subdued in hopeless thrall,
The easy prey of any, the scoff and scorn of all!'

Oh, ever as the Tempter spoke, and feeble Nature's fears
Wrung drop by drop the scalding flow of unavailing tears,
I wrestled down the evil thoughts, and strove in silent prayer,
To feel, O Helper of the weak! that Thou indeed wert there!

I thought of Paul and Silas, within Philippi's cell,
And how from Peter's sleeping limbs the prison shackles fell,
Till I seemed to hear the trailing of an angel's robe of white,
And to feel a blessed presence invisible to sight.

Bless the Lord for all His mercies!—for the peace and love I felt,
Like dew of Hermon's holy hill, upon my spirit melt;
When 'Get behind me, Satan!' was the language of my heart,
And I felt the Evil Tempter with all his doubts depart.

Slow broke the gray cold morning; again the sunshine fell,
Flecked with the shade of bar and grate within my lonely cell;
The hoar-frost melted on the wall, and upward from the street
Came careless laugh and idle word, and tread of passing feet.

At length the heavy bolts fell back, my door was open cast,
And slowly at the sheriff's side, up the long street I passed;

I heard the murmur round me, and felt, but dared not see,
How, from every door and window, the people gazed on me.

And doubt and fear fell on me, shame burned upon my cheek,
Swam earth and sky around me, my trembling limbs grew weak:
'O Lord! support thy handmaid; and from her soul cast out
The fear of man, which brings a snare, the weakness and the doubt.'

Then the dreary shadows scattered, like a cloud in morning's breeze,
And a low deep voice within me seemed whispering words like these:
'Though thy earth be as the iron, and thy heaven a brazen wall,
Trust still His loving-kindness whose power is over all.'

We paused at length, where at my feet the sunlit waters broke
On glaring reach of shining beach, and shingly wall of rock;
The merchant-ships lay idly there, in hard clear lines on high,
Tracing with rope and slender spar their network on the sky.

And there were ancient citizens, cloak-wrapped and grave and cold,
And grim and stout sea-captains with faces bronzed and old,
And on his horse, with Rawson, his cruel clerk at hand,
Sat dark and haughty Endicott, the ruler of the land.

And poisoning with his evil words the ruler's ready ear,
The priest leaned o'er his saddle, with laugh and scoff and jeer;
It stirred my soul, and from my lips the seal of silence broke,
As if through woman's weakness a warning spirit spoke.

I cried, 'The Lord rebuke thee, thou smiter of the meek,
Thou robber of the righteous, thou trampler of the weak!

Go light the dark, cold hearth-stones,—go turn the prison lock
Of the poor hearts thou hast hunted, thou wolf amid the flock!'

Dark lowered the brows of Endicott, and with a deeper red
O'er Rawson's wine-empurpled cheek the flush of anger spread;
'Good people,' quoth the white-lipped priest, 'heed not her words so wild,
Her Master speaks within her,—the Devil owns his child!'

But gray heads shook, and young brows knit, the while the sheriff read
That law the wicked rulers against the poor have made,
Who to their house of Rimmon and idol priesthood bring
No bended knee of worship, nor gainful offering.

Then to the stout sea-captains the sheriff, turning, said,—
'Which of ye, worthy seamen, will take this Quaker maid?
In the Isle of fair Barbadoes, or on Virginia's shore,
You may hold her at a higher price than Indian girl or Moor.'

Grim and silent stood the captains; and when again he cried,
'Speak out, my worthy seamen!'—no voice, no sign replied;
But I felt a hard hand press my own, and kind words met my ear,—
'God bless thee, and preserve thee, my gentle girl and dear!'

A weight seemed lifted from my heart, a pitying friend was nigh,—
I felt it in his hard, rough hand, and saw it in his eye;
And when again the sheriff spoke, that voice, so kind to me,
Growled back its stormy answer like the roaring of the sea,—

'Pile my ship with bars of silver, pack with coins of Spanish gold,
From keel-piece up to deck-plank, the roomage of her hold,

By the living God who made me!—I
would sooner in your bay
Sink ship and crew and cargo, than bear
this child away!'

'Well answered, worthy captain, shame
on their cruel laws!'
Ran through the crowd in murmurs loud
the people's just applause.
'Like the herdsman of Tekoa, in Israel
of old,
Shall we see the poor and righteous again
for silver sold?'

I looked on haughty Endicott; with
weapon half-way drawn,
Swept round the throng his lion glare of
bitter hate and scorn;
Fiercely he drew his bridle-rein, and
turned in silence back,
And sneering priest and baffled clerk rode
murmuring in his track.

Hard after them the sheriff looked, in
bitterness of soul;
Thrice smote his staff upon the ground,
and crushed his parchment roll.
'Good friends,' he said, 'since both have
fled, the ruler and the priest,
Judge ye, if from their further work I be
not well released.'

Loud was the cheer which, full and clear,
swept round the silent bay,
As, with kind words and kinder looks,
he bade me go my way;
For He who turns the courses of the
streamlet of the glen,
And the river of great waters, had turned
the hearts of men.

Oh, at that hour the very earth seemed
changed beneath my eye,
A holier wonder round me rose the blue
walls of the sky,
A lovelier light on rock and hill and
stream and woodland lay,
And softer lapsed on sunnier sands the
waters of the bay.

Thanksgiving to the Lord of life! to Him
all praises be,
Who from the hands of evil men hath set
His handmaid free;

All praise to Him before whose power
the mighty are afraid,
Who takes the crafty in the snare which
for the poor is laid!

Sing, O my soul, rejoicingly, on evening's
twilight calm
Uplift the loud thanksgiving, pour forth
the grateful psalm;
Let all dear hearts with me rejoice, as
did the saints of old,
When of the Lord's good angel the rescued
Peter told.

And weep and howl, ye evil priests and
mighty men of wrong,
The Lord shall smite the proud, and lay
His hand upon the strong.
Woe to the wicked rulers in His avenging
hour!
Woe to the wolves who seek the flocks to
raven and devour!

But let the humble ones arise, the poor
in heart be glad,
And let the mourning ones again with
robes of praise be clad.
For He who cooled the furnace, and
smoothed the stormy wave,
And tamed the Chaldean lions, is mighty
still to save!

1843.

THE NEW WIFE AND THE OLD.

The following ballad is founded upon one of the marvellous legends connected with the famous General M——, of Hampton, New Hampshire, who was regarded by his neighbors as a Yankee Faust, in league with the adversary. I give the story, as I heard it when a child, from a venerable family visitant[3].

Dark the halls, and cold the feast,
Gone the bridemaids, gone the priest.
All is over, all is done,
Twain of yesterday are one!
Blooming girl and manhood gray,
Autumn in the arms of May!

Hushed within and hushed without,
Dancing feet and wrestlers' shout;
Dies the bonfire on the hill;
All is dark and all is still,

Save the starlight, save the breeze
Moaning through the graveyard trees;
And the great sea-waves below,
Pulse of the midnight beating slow.

From the brief dream of a bride
She hath wakened, at his side.
With half-uttered shriek and start,—
Feels she not his beating heart?
And the pressure of his arm,
And his breathing near and warm?

Lightly from the bridal bed
Springs that fair dishevelled head,
And a feeling, new, intense,
Half of shame, half innocence,
Maiden fear and wonder speaks
Through her lips and changing cheeks.

From the oaken mantel glowing,
Faintest light the lamp is throwing
On the mirror's antique mould,
High-backed chair, and wainscot old,
And, through faded curtains stealing,
His dark sleeping face revealing.

Listless lies the strong man there,
Silver-streaked his careless hair;
Lips of love have left no trace
On that hard and haughty face;
And that forehead's knitted thought
Love's soft hand hath not unwrought.

'Yet,' she sighs, 'he loves me well,
More than these calm lips will tell.
Stooping to my lowly state,
He hath made me rich and great,
And I bless him, though he be
Hard and stern to all save me!'

While she speaketh, falls the light
O'er her fingers small and white;
Gold and gem, and costly ring
Back the timid lustre fling,—
Love's selectest gifts, and rare,
His proud hand had fastened there.

Gratefully she marks the glow
From those tapering lines of snow;
Fondly o'er the sleeper bending
His black hair with golden blending,
In her soft and light caress,
Cheek and lip together press.

Ha!—that start of horror! why
That wild stare and wilder cry,
Full of terror, full of pain?
Is there madness in her brain?
Hark! that gasping, hoarse and low,
'Spare me,—spare me,—let me go!'

God have mercy!—icy cold
Spectral hands her own enfold,
Drawing silently from them
Love's fair gifts of gold and gem.
'Waken! save me!' still as death
At her side he slumbereth.

Ring and bracelet all are gone,
And that ice-cold hand withdrawn;
But she hears a murmur low,
Full of sweetness, full of woe,
Half a sigh and half a moan:
'Fear not! give the dead her own!'

Ah!—the dead wife's voice she knows!
That cold hand whose pressure froze,
Once in warmest life had borne
Gem and band her own hath worn.
'Wake thee! wake thee!' Lo, his eyes
Open with a dull surprise.

In his arms the strong man folds her,
Closer to his breast he holds her;
Trembling limbs his own are meeting,
And he feels her heart's quick beating:
'Nay, my dearest, why this fear?'
'Hush!' she saith, 'the dead is here!'

'Nay, a dream,—an idle dream.'
But before the lamp's pale gleam
Tremblingly her hand she raises.
There no more the diamond blazes,
Clasp of pearl, or ring of gold,—
'Ah!' she sighs, 'her hand was cold!'

Broken words of cheer he saith,
But his dark lip quivereth,
And as o'er the past he thinketh,
From his young wife's arms he shrinketh;
Can those soft arms round him lie,
Underneath his dead wife's eye?

She her fair young head can rest
Soothed and childlike on his breast,
And in trustful innocence
Draw new strength and courage thence:

He, the proud man, feels within
But the cowardice of sin!

She can murmur in her thought
Simple prayers her mother taught,
And His blessed angels call,
Whose great love is over all;
He, alone, in prayerless pride,
Meets the dark Past at her side!

One, who living shrank with dread
From his look, or word, or tread,
Unto whom her early grave
Was as freedom to the slave,
Moves him at this midnight hour,
With the dead's unconscious power!

Ah, the dead, the unforgot!
From their solemn homes of thought,
Where the cypress shadows blend
Darkly over foe and friend,
Or in love or sad rebuke,
Back upon the living look.

And the tenderest ones and weakest,
Who their wrongs have borne the meekest,
Lifting from those dark, still places,
Sweet and sad-remembered faces,
O'er the guilty hearts behind
An unwitting triumph find.

1843.

THE BRIDAL OF PENNACOOK.

Winnepurkit, otherwise called George, Sachem of Saugus, married a daughter of Passaconaway, the great Pennacook chieftain, in 1662. The wedding took place at Pennacook (now Concord, N. H.), and the ceremonies closed with a great feast. According to the usages of the chiefs, Passaconaway ordered a select number of his men to accompany the newly-married couple to the dwelling of the husband, where in turn there was another great feast. Some time after, the wife of Winnepurkit expressing a desire to visit her father's house was permitted to go, accompanied by a brave escort of her husband's chief men. But when she wished to return, her father sent a messenger to Saugus, informing her husband, and asking him to come and take her away. He returned for answer that he had escorted his wife to her father's house in a style that became a chief, and that now if she wished to return, her father must send her back, in the same way. This Passaconaway refused to do, and it is said that here terminated the connection of his daughter with the Saugus chief.—*Vide* Morton's *New Canaan*.

We had been wandering for many days
Through the rough northern country. We had seen
The sunset, with its bars of purple cloud,
Like a new heaven, shine upward from the lake
Of Winnepiseogee; and had felt
The sunrise breezes, midst the leafy isles
Which stoop their summer beauty to the lips
Of the bright waters. We had checked our steeds,
Silent with wonder, where the mountain wall
Is piled to heaven; and, through the narrow rift
Of the vast rocks, against whose rugged feet
Beats the mad torrent with perpetual roar,
Where noonday is as twilight, and the wind
Comes burdened with the everlasting moan
Of forests and of far-off waterfalls,
We had looked upward where the summer sky,
Tasselled with clouds light-woven by the sun,
Sprung its blue arch above the abutting crags
O'er-roofing the vast portal of the land
Beyond the wall of mountains. We had passed
The high source of the Saco; and bewildered
In the dwarf spruce-belts of the Crystal Hills,
Had heard above us, like a voice in the cloud,
The horn of Fabyan sounding; and atop
Of old Agiochook had seen the mountains
Piled to the northward, shagged with wood, and thick
As meadow mole-hills,—the far sea of Casco,

A white gleam on the horizon of the east;
Fair lakes, embosomed in the woods and hills;
Moosehillock's mountain range, and Kearsarge
Lifting his granite forehead to the sun!

And we had rested underneath the oaks
Shadowing the bank, whose grassy spires are shaken
By the perpetual beating of the falls
Of the wild Ammonoosuc. We had tracked
The winding Pemigewasset, overhung
By beechen shadows, whitening down its rocks,
Or lazily gliding through its intervals,
From waving rye-fields sending up the gleam
Of sunlit waters. We had seen the moon
Rising behind Umbagog's eastern pines,
Like a great Indian camp-fire; and its beams
At midnight spanning with a bridge of silver
The Merrimac by Uncanoonuc's falls.

There were five souls of us whom travel's chance
Had thrown together in these wild north hills:
A city lawyer, for a month escaping
From his dull office, where the weary eye
Saw only hot brick walls and close thronged streets;
Briefless as yet, but with an eye to see
Life's sunniest side, and with a heart to take
Its chances all as godsends; and his brother,
Pale from long pulpit studies, yet retaining
The warmth and freshness of a genial heart,
Whose mirror of the beautiful and true,
In Man and Nature, was as yet undimmed
By dust of theologic strife, or breath
Of sect, or cobwebs of scholastic lore;
Like a clear crystal calm of water, taking
The hue and image of o'erleaning flowers,
Sweet human faces, white clouds of the noon,
Slant starlight glimpses through the dewy leaves,
And tenderest moonrise. 'T was, in truth, a study,
To mark his spirit, alternating between
A decent and professional gravity
And an irreverent mirthfulness, which often
Laughed in the face of his divinity,
Plucked off the sacred ephod, quite unshrined
The oracle, and for the pattern priest
Left us the man. A shrewd, sagacious merchant,
To whom the soiled sheet found in Crawford's inn,
Giving the latest news of city stocks
And sales of cotton, had a deeper meaning
Than the great presence of the awful mountains
Glorified by the sunset; and his daughter,
A delicate flower on whom had blown too long
Those evil winds, which, sweeping from the ice
And winnowing the fogs of Labrador,
Shed their cold blight round Massachusetts Bay,
With the same breath which stirs Spring's opening leaves
And lifts her half-formed flower-bell on its stem,
Poisoning our seaside atmosphere.

It chanced
That as we turned upon our homeward way,
A drear northeastern storm came howling up
The valley of the Saco; and that girl
Who had stood with us upon Mount Washington,
Her brown locks ruffled by the wind which whirled
In gusts around its sharp, cold pinnacle,
Who had joined our gay trout-fishing in the streams
Which lave that giant's feet; whose laugh was heard
Like a bird's carol on the sunrise breeze
Which swelled our sail amidst the lake's green islands,
Shrank from its harsh, chill breath, and visibly drooped

Like a flower in the frost. So, in that quiet inn
Which looks from Conway on the mountains piled
Heavily against the horizon of the north,
Like summer thunder-clouds, we made our home:
And while the mist hung over dripping hills,
And the cold wind-driven rain-drops all day long
Beat their sad music upon roof and pane,
We strove to cheer our gentle invalid.

The lawyer in the pauses of the storm
Went angling down the Saco, and, returning,
Recounted his adventures and mishaps;
Gave us the history of his scaly clients,
Mingling with ludicrous yet apt citations
Of barbarous law Latin, passages
From Izaak Walton's Angler, sweet and fresh
As the flower-skirted streams of Staffordshire,
Where, under aged trees, the southwest wind
Of soft June mornings fanned the thin, white hair
Of the sage fisher. And, if truth be told,
Our youthful candidate forsook his sermons,
His commentaries, articles and creeds,
For the fair page of human loveliness,
The missal of young hearts, whose sacred text
Is music, its illumining, sweet smiles.
He sang the songs she loved; and in his low,
Deep, earnest voice, recited many a page
Of poetry, the holiest, tenderest lines
Of the sad bard of Olney, the sweet songs,
Simple and beautiful as Truth and Nature,
Of him whose whitened locks on Rydal Mount
Are lifted yet by morning breezes blowing
From the green hills, immortal in his lays.
And for myself, obedient to her wish,
I searched our landlord's proffered library:
A well-thumbed Bunyan, with its nice wood pictures
Of scaly fiends and angels not unlike them;
Watts' unmelodious psalms; Astrology's
Last home, a musty pile of almanacs,
And an old chronicle of border wars
And Indian history. And, as I read
A story of the marriage of the Chief
Of Saugus to the dusky Weetamoo,
Daughter of Passaconaway, who dwelt
In the old time upon the Merrimac,
Our fair one, in the playful exercise
Of her prerogative,—the right divine
Of youth and beauty,—bade us versify
The legend, and with ready pencil sketched
Its plan and outlines, laughingly assigning
To each his part, and barring our excuses
With absolute will. So, like the cavaliers
Whose voices still are heard in the Romance
Of silver-tongued Boccaccio, on the banks
Of Arno, with soft tales of love beguiling
The ear of languid beauty, plague exiled
From stately Florence, we rehearsed our rhymes
To their fair auditor, and shared by turns
Her kind approval and her playful censure.

It may be that these fragments owe alone
To the fair setting of their circumstances,—
The associations of time, scene, and audience,—
Their place amid the pictures which fill up
The chambers of my memory. Yet I trust
That some, who sigh, while wandering in thought,
Pilgrims of Romance o'er the olden world,
That our broad land,—our sea-like lakes and mountains
Piled to the clouds, our rivers overhung
By forests which have known no other change
For ages than the budding and the fall
Of leaves, our valleys lovelier than those
Which the old poets sang of,—should but figure
On the apocryphal chart of speculation
As pastures, wood-lots, mill-sites, with the privileges,

Rights, and appurtenances, which make up
A Yankee Paradise, unsung, unknown,
To beautiful tradition; even their names,
Whose melody yet lingers like the last
Vibration of the red man's requiem,
Exchanged for syllables significant.
Of cotton-mill and rail-car, will look kindly
Upon this effort to call up the ghost
Of our dim Past, and listen with pleased ear
To the responses of the questioned Shade.

I. THE MERRIMAC.

O child of that white-crested mountain whose springs
Gush forth in the shade of the cliff-eagle's wings,
Down whose slopes to the lowlands thy wild waters shine,
Leaping gray walls of rock, flashing through the dwarf pine;

From that cloud-curtained cradle so cold and so lone,
From the arms of that wintry-locked mother of stone,
By hills hung with forests, through vales wide and free,
Thy mountain-born brightness glanced down to the sea!

No bridge arched thy waters save that where the trees
Stretched their long arms above thee and kissed in the breeze:
No sound save the lapse of the waves on thy shores,
The plunging of otters, the light dip of oars.

Green-tufted, oak-shaded, by Amoskeag's fall
Thy twin Uncanoonucs rose stately and tall,
Thy Nashua meadows lay green and unshorn,
And the hills of Pentucket were tasselled with corn.

But thy Pennacook valley was fairer than these,
And greener its grasses and taller its trees,
Ere the sound of an axe in the forest had rung,
Or the mower his scythe in the meadows had swung.

In their sheltered repose looking out from the wood
The bark-builded wigwams of Pennacook stood;
There glided the corn-dance, the council-fire shone,
And against the red war-post the hatchet was thrown.

There the old smoked in silence their pipes, and the young
To the pike and the white-perch their baited lines flung;
There the boy shaped his arrows, and there the shy maid
Wove her many-hued baskets and bright wampum braid.

O Stream of the Mountains! if answer of thine
Could rise from thy waters to question of mine,
Methinks through the din of thy thronged banks a moan
Of sorrow would swell for the days which have gone.

Not for thee the dull jar of the loom and the wheel,
The gliding of shuttles, the ringing of steel;
But that old voice of waters, of bird and of breeze,
The dip of the wild-fowl, the rustling of trees!

II. THE BASHABA[4].

Lift we the twilight curtains of the Past,
And, turning from familiar sight and sound,
Sadly and full of reverence let us cast
A glance upon Tradition's shadowy ground,

Led by the few pale lights which, glimmering round
That dim, strange land of Eld, seem dying fast;
And that which history gives not to the eye,
The faded coloring of Time's tapestry,
Let Fancy, with her dream-dipped brush, supply.

Roof of bark and walls of pine,
Through whose chinks the sunbeams shine,
Tracing many a golden line
On the ample floor within;
Where, upon that earth-floor stark,
Lay the gaudy mats of bark,
With the bear's hide, rough and dark,
And the red-deer's skin.

Window-tracery, small and slight,
Woven of the willow white,
Lent a dimly checkered light;
And the night-stars glimmered down,
Where the lodge-fire's heavy smoke,
Slowly through an opening broke,
In the low roof, ribbed with oak,
Sheathed with hemlock brown.

Gloomed behind the changeless shade
By the solemn pine-wood made;
Through the rugged palisade,
In the open foreground planted,
Glimpses came of rowers rowing,
Stir of leaves and wild-flowers blowing,
Steel-like gleams of water flowing,
In the sunlight slanted.

Here the mighty Bashaba
Held his long-unquestioned sway,
From the White Hills, far away,
To the great sea's sounding shore;
Chief of chiefs, his regal word
All the river Sachems heard,
At his call the war-dance stirred,
Or was still once more.

There his spoils of chase and war,
Jaw of wolf and black bear's paw,
Panther's skin and eagle's claw,
Lay beside his axe and bow;
And, adown the roof-pole hung,
Loosely on a snake-skin strung,
In the smoke his scalp-locks swung
Grimly to and fro.

Nightly down the river going,
Swifter was the hunter's rowing,
When he saw that lodge-fire glowing
O'er the waters still and red;
And the squaw's dark eye burned brighter,
And she drew her blanket tighter,
As, with quicker step and lighter,
From that door she fled.

For that chief had magic skill,
And a Panisee's dark will,
Over powers of good and ill,
Powers which bless and powers which ban;
Wizard lord of Pennacook,
Chiefs upon their war-path shook,
When they met the steady look
Of that wise dark man.

Tales of him the gray squaw told,
When the winter night-wind cold
Pierced her blanket's thickest fold,
And her fire burned low and small,
Till the very child abed,
Drew its bear-skin over head,
Shrinking from the pale lights shed
On the trembling wall.

All the subtle spirits hiding
Under earth or wave, abiding
In the caverned rock, or riding
Misty clouds or morning breeze;
Every dark intelligence,
Secret soul, and influence
Of all things which outward sense
Feels, or hears, or sees,—

These the wizard's skill confessed,
At his bidding banned or blessed,
Stormful woke or lulled to rest
Wind and cloud, and fire and flood;
Burned for him the drifted snow,
Bade through ice fresh lilies blow,
And the leaves of summer grow
Over winter's wood!

Not untrue that tale of old!
Now, as then, the wise and bold
All the powers of Nature hold
Subject to their kingly will;
From the wondering crowds ashore,
Treading life's wild waters o'er,
As upon a marble floor,
Moves the strong man still.

Still, to such, life's elements
With their sterner laws dispense,
And the chain of consequence
Broken in their pathway lies;
Time and change their vassals making,
Flowers from icy pillows waking,
Tresses of the sunrise shaking
Over midnight skies.

Still, to th' earnest soul, the sun
Rests on towered Gibeon,
And the moon of Ajalon
Lights the battle-grounds of life;
To his aid the strong reverses
Hidden powers and giant forces,
And the high stars, in their courses,
Mingle in his strife!

III. THE DAUGHTER.

The soot-black brows of men, the yell
Of women thronging round the bed,
The tinkling charm of ring and shell,
The Powah whispering o'er the dead!
All these the Sachem's home had known,
When, on her journey long and wild
To the dim World of Souls, alone,
In her young beauty passed the mother of his child.

Three bow-shots from the Sachem's dwelling
They laid her in the walnut shade,
Where a green hillock gently swelling
Her fitting mound of burial made.
There trailed the vine in summer hours,
The tree-perched squirrel dropped his shell,—
On velvet moss and pale-hued flowers,
Woven with leaf and spray, the softened sunshine fell!

The Indian's heart is hard and cold,
It closes darkly o'er its care,
And formed in Nature's sternest mould,
Is slow to feel, and strong to bear.
The war-paint on the Sachem's face,
Unwet with tears, shone fierce and red,
And still, in battle or in chase,
Dry leaf and snow-rime crisped beneath his foremost tread.

Yet when her name was heard no more,
And when the robe her mother gave,
And small, light moccasin she wore,
Had slowly wasted on her grave,
Unmarked of him the dark maids sped
Their sunset dance and moonlit play;
No other shared his lonely bed,
No other fair young head upon his bosom lay.

A lone, stern man. Yet, as sometimes
The tempest-smitten tree receives
From one small root the sap which climbs
Its topmost spray and crowning leaves,
So from his child the Sachem drew
A life of Love and Hope, and felt
His cold and rugged nature through
The softness and the warmth of her young being melt.

A laugh which in the woodland rang
Bemocking April's gladdest bird,—
A light and graceful form which sprang
To meet him when his step was heard,—
Eyes by his lodge-fire flashing dark,
Small fingers stringing bead and shell
Or weaving mats of bright-hued bark,—
With these the household-god had graced his wigwam well.

Child of the forest! strong and free,
Slight-robed, with loosely flowing hair,
She swam the lake or climbed the tree,
Or struck the flying bird in air.
O'er the heaped drifts of winter's moon
Her snow-shoes tracked the hunter's way;
And dazzling in the summer noon
The blade of her light oar threw off its shower of spray!

Unknown to her the rigid rule,
The dull restraint, the chiding frown,
The weary torture of the school,
The taming of wild nature down.
Her only lore, the legends told
Around the hunter's fire at night;
Stars rose and set, and seasons rolled,
Flowers bloomed and snow-flakes fell, unquestioned in her sight.

Unknown to her the subtle skill
With which the artist-eye can trace
In rock and tree and lake and hill
The outlines of divinest grace;
Unknown the fine soul's keen unrest,
Which sees, admires, yet yearns alway;
Too closely on her mother's breast
To note her smiles of love the child of Nature lay!

It is enough for such to be
Of common, natural things a part,
To feel, with bird and stream and tree,
The pulses of the same great heart;
But we, from Nature long exiled,
In our cold homes of Art and Thought
Grieve like the stranger-tended child,
Which seeks its mother's arms, and sees but feels them not.

The garden rose may richly bloom
In cultured soil and genial air,
To cloud the light of Fashion's room
Or droop in Beauty's midnight hair;
In lonelier grace, to sun and dew
The sweetbrier on the hillside shows
Its single leaf and fainter hue,
Untrained and wildly free, yet still a sister rose!

Thus o'er the heart of Weetamoo[5]
Their mingling shades of joy and ill
The instincts of her nature threw;
The savage was a woman still.
Midst outlines dim of maiden schemes,
Heart-colored prophecies of life,
Rose on the ground of her young dreams
The light of a new home, the lover and the wife.

IV. THE WEDDING.

Cool and dark fell the autumn night,
But the Bashaba's wigwam glowed with light,
For down from its roof, by green withes hung,
Flaring and smoking the pine-knots swung.

And along the river great wood-fires
Shot into the night their long, red spires,
Showing behind the tall, dark wood,
Flashing before on the sweeping flood.

In the changeful wind, with shimmer and shade,
Now high, now low, that firelight played,
On tree-leaves wet with evening dews,
On gliding water and still canoes.

The trapper that night on Turee's brook,
And the weary fisher on Contoocook,
Saw over the marshes, and through the pine,
And down on the river, the dance-lights shine.

For the Saugus Sachem had come to woo
The Bashaba's daughter Weetamoo,
And laid at her father's feet that night
His softest furs and wampum white.

From the Crystal Hills to the far southeast
The river Sagamores came to the feast;
And chiefs whose homes the sea-winds shook
Sat down on the mats of Pennacook.

They came from Sunapee's shore of rock,
From the snowy sources of Snoganock,
And from rough Coös whose thick woods shake
Their pine-cones in Umbagog Lake.

From Ammonoosuc's mountain pass,
Wild as his home, came Chepewass;
And the Keenomps of the hills which throw
Their shade on the Smile of Manito.

With pipes of peace and bows unstrung,
Glowing with paint came old and young,
In wampum and furs and feathers arrayed,
To the dance and feast the Bashaba made.

Bird of the air and beast of the field,
All which the woods and the waters yield,
On dishes of birch and hemlock piled,
Garnished and graced that banquet wild.

Steaks of the brown bear fat and large
From the rocky slopes of the Kearsarge;
Delicate trout from Babboosuck brook,
And salmon speared in the Contoocook;

Squirrels which fed where nuts fell thick
In the gravelly bed of the Otternic;
And small wild-hens in reed-snares caught
From the banks of Sondagardee brought;

Pike and perch from the Suncook taken,
Nuts from the trees of the Black Hills shaken,
Cranberries picked in the Squamscot bog,
And grapes from the vines of Piscataquog:

And, drawn from that great stone vase which stands[6]
In the river scooped by a spirit's hands,
Garnished with spoons of shell and horn,
Stood the birchen dishes of smoking corn.

Thus bird of the air and beast of the field,
All which the woods and the waters yield,
Furnished in that olden day
The bridal feast of the Bashaba.

And merrily when that feast was done
On the fire-lit green the dance begun,
With squaws' shrill stave, and deeper hum
Of old men beating the Indian drum.

Painted and plumed, with scalp-locks flowing,
And red arms tossing and black eyes glowing,
Now in the light and now in the shade
Around the fires the dancers played.

The step was quicker, the song more shrill,
And the beat of the small drums louder still
Whenever within the circle drew
The Saugus Sachem and Weetamoo.

The moons of forty winters had shed
Their snow upon that chieftain's head,
And toil and care and battle's chance
Had seamed his hard, dark countenance.

A fawn beside the bison grim,—
Why turns the bride's fond eye on him,
In whose cold look is naught beside
The triumph of a sullen pride?

Ask why the graceful grape entwines
The rough oak with her arm of vines;
And why the gray rock's rugged cheek
The soft lips of the mosses seek:

Why, with wise instinct, Nature seems
To harmonize her wide extremes,
Linking the stronger with the weak,
The haughty with the soft and meek!

V. THE NEW HOME.

A wild and broken landscape, spiked with firs,
Roughening the bleak horizon's northern edge;
Steep, cavernous hillsides, where black hemlock spurs
And sharp, gray splinters of the wind-swept ledge
Pierced the thin-glazed ice, or bristling rose,
Where the cold rim of the sky sunk down upon the snows.

And eastward cold, wide marshes stretched away,
Dull, dreary flats without a bush or tree,
O'er-crossed by icy creeks, where twice a day
Gurgled the waters of the moon-struck sea;
And faint with distance came the stifled roar,
The melancholy lapse of waves on that low shore.

No cheerful village with its mingling smokes,
No laugh of children wrestling in the snow,

No camp-fire blazing through the hillside oaks,
No fishers kneeling on the ice below;
Yet midst all desolate things of sound and view,
Through the long winter moons smiled dark-eyed Weetamoo.

Her heart had found a home; and freshly all
Its beautiful affections overgrew
Their rugged prop. As o'er some granite wall
Soft vine-leaves open to the moistening dew
And warm bright sun, the love of that young wife
Found on a hard cold breast the dew and warmth of life.

The steep, bleak hills, the melancholy shore,
The long, dead level of the marsh between,
A coloring of unreal beauty wore
Through the soft golden mist of young love seen.
For o'er those hills and from that dreary plain,
Nightly she welcomed home her hunter chief again.

No warmth of heart, no passionate burst of feeling,
Repaid her welcoming smile and parting kiss,
No fond and playful dalliance half concealing,
Under the guise of mirth, its tenderness;
But, in their stead, the warrior's settled pride,
And vanity's pleased smile with homage satisfied.

Enough for Weetamoo, that she alone
Sat on his mat and slumbered at his side;
That he whose fame to her young ear had flown
Now looked upon her proudly as his bride;
That he whose name the Mohawk trembling heard
Vouchsafed to her at times a kindly look or word.

For she had learned the maxims of her race,
Which teach the woman to become a slave,
And feel herself the pardonless disgrace
Of love's fond weakness in the wise and brave,—
The scandal and the shame which they incur,
Who give to woman all which man requires of her.

So passed the winter moons. The sun at last
Broke link by link the frost chain of the rills,
And the warm breathings of the south-west passed
Over the hoar rime of the Saugus hills;
The gray and desolate marsh grew green once more,
And the birch-tree's tremulous shade fell round the Sachem's door.

Then from far Pennacook swift runners came,
With gift and greeting for the Saugus chief;
Beseeching him in the great Sachem's name,
That, with the coming of the flower and leaf,
The song of birds, the warm breeze and the rain,
Young Weetamoo might greet her lonely sire again.

And Winnepurkit called his chiefs together,
And a grave council in his wigwam met,
Solemn and brief in words, considering whether
The rigid rules of forest etiquette
Permitted Weetamoo once more to look
Upon her father's face and green-banked Pennacook.

With interludes of pipe-smoke and strong water,
The forest sages pondered, and at length
Concluded in a body to escort her
Up to her father's home of pride and strength,
Impressing thus on Pennacook a sense
Of Winnepurkit's power and regal consequence.

So through old woods which Aukeetamit's hand[7]
A soft and many-shaded greenness lent,
Over high breezy hills, and meadow land
Yellow with flowers, the wild procession went,
Till, rolling down its wooded banks between,
A broad, clear, mountain stream, the Merrimac was seen.

The hunter leaning on his bow undrawn,
The fisher lounging on the pebbled shores,
Squaws in the clearing dropping the seed-corn,
Young children peering through the wigwam doors,
Saw with delight, surrounded by her train
Of painted Saugus braves, their Weetamoo again.

VI. AT PENNACOOK.

The hills are dearest which our childish feet
Have climbed the earliest; and the streams most sweet
Are ever those at which our young lips drank
Stooped to their waters o'er the grassy bank.

Midst the cold dreary sea-watch, Home's hearth-light
Shines round the helmsman plunging through the night;
And still, with inward eye, the traveller sees
In close, dark, stranger streets his native trees.

The home-sick dreamer's brow is nightly fanned
By breezes whispering of his native land,
And on the stranger's dim and dying eye
The soft, sweet pictures of his childhood lie.

Joy then for Weetamoo, to sit once more
A child upon her father's wigwam floor!
Once more with her old fondness to beguile
From his cold eye the strange light of a smile.

The long, bright days of summer swiftly passed,
The dry leaves whirled in autumn's rising blast,
And evening cloud and whitening sunrise rime
Told of the coming of the winter-time.

But vainly looked, the while, young Weetamoo
Down the dark river for her chief's canoe;
No dusky messenger from Saugus brought
The grateful tidings which the young wife sought.

At length a runner from her father sent,
To Winnepurkit's sea-cooled wigwam went;
'Eagle of Saugus,—in the woods the dove
Mourns for the shelter of thy wings of love.'

But the dark chief of Saugus turned aside
In the grim anger of hard-hearted pride;
'I bore her as became a chieftain's daughter,
Up to her home beside the gliding water.

'If now no more a mat for her is found
Of all which line her father's wigwam round,
Let Pennacook call out his warrior train,
And send her back with wampum gifts again.'

The baffled runner turned upon his track,
Bearing the words of Winnepurkit back.

'Dog of the Marsh,' cried Pennacook, 'no more
Shall child of mine sit on his wigwam floor.

'Go, let him seek some meaner squaw to spread
The stolen bear-skin of his beggar's bed;
Son of a fish-hawk! let him dig his clams
For some vile daughter of the Agawams,

'Or coward Nipmucks! may his scalp dry black
In Mohawk smoke, before I send her back.'
He shook his clenched hand towards the ocean wave,
While hoarse assent his listening council gave.

Alas, poor bride! can thy grim sire impart
His iron hardness to thy woman's heart?
Or cold self-torturing pride like his atone
For love denied and life's warm beauty flown?

On Autumn's gray and mournful grave the snow
Hung its white wreaths; with stifled voice and low
The river crept, by one vast bridge o'ercrossed,
Built by the hoar-locked artisan of Frost.

And many a moon in beauty newly born
Pierced the red sunset with her silver horn,
Or, from the east, across her azure field
Rolled the wide brightness of her full-orbed shield.

Yet Winnepurkit came not,—on the mat
Of the scorned wife her dusky rival sat;
And he, the while, in Western woods afar,
Urged the long chase, or trod the path of war.

Dry up thy tears, young daughter of a chief!
Waste not on him the sacredness of grief;
Be the fierce spirit of thy sire thine own,
His lips of scorning, and his heart of stone.

What heeds the warrior of a hundred fights,
The storm-worn watcher through long hunting nights,
Cold, crafty, proud of woman's weak distress,
Her home-bound grief and pining loneliness?

VII. THE DEPARTURE.

The wild March rains had fallen fast and long
The snowy mountains of the North among.
Making each vale a watercourse, each hill
Bright with the cascade of some new-made rill.

Gnawed by the sunbeams, softened by the rain,
Heaved underneath by the swollen current's strain,
The ice-bridge yielded, and the Merrimac
Bore the huge ruin crashing down its track.

On that strong turbid water, a small boat
Guided by one weak hand was seen to float;
Evil the fate which loosed it from the shore,
Too early voyager with too frail an oar!

Down the vexed centre of that rushing tide,
The thick, huge ice-blocks threatening either side,
The foam-white rocks of Amoskeag in view,
With arrowy swiftness sped that light canoe.

The trapper, moistening his moose's meat
On the wet bank by Uncanoonuc's feet,
Saw the swift boat flash down the troubled stream;
Slept he, or waked he? was it truth or dream?

The straining eye bent fearfully before,
The small hand clenching on the useless oar,

The bead-wrought blanket trailing o'er the water—
He knew them all—woe for the Sachem's daughter!

Sick and aweary of her lonely life,
Heedless of peril, the still faithful wife
Had left her mother's grave, her father's door,
To seek the wigwam of her chief once more.

Down the white rapids like a sear leaf whirled,
On the sharp rocks and piled-up ices hurled,
Empty and broken, circled the canoe
In the vexed pool below—but where was Weetamoo?

VIII. SONG OF INDIAN WOMEN.

The Dark eye has left us,
The Spring-bird has flown;
On the pathway of spirits
She wanders alone.
The song of the wood-dove has died on our shore:
Mat wonck kunna-monee[8]*!* We hear it no more!

O dark water Spirit!
We cast on thy wave
These furs which may never
Hang over her grave;
Bear down to the lost one the robes that she wore:
Mat wonck kunna-monee! We see her no more!

Of the strange land she walks in
No Powah has told:
It may burn with the sunshine,
Or freeze with the cold.
Let us give to our lost one the robes that she wore:
Mat wonck kunna-monee! We see her no more!

The path she is treading
Shall soon be our own;
Each gliding in shadow
Unseen and alone!

In vain shall we call on the souls gone before:
Mat wonck kunna-monee! They hear us no more!

O mighty Sowanna[9]!
Thy gateways unfold,
From thy wigwam of sunset
Lift curtains of gold!
Take home the poor Spirit whose journey is o'er:
Mat wonck kunna-monee! We see her no more!

So sang the Children of the Leaves beside
The broad, dark river's coldly flowing tide;
Now low, now harsh, with sob-like pause and swell,
On the high wind their voices rose and fell.
Nature's wild music,—sounds of wind-swept trees,
The scream of birds, the wailing of the breeze,
The roar of waters, steady, deep, and strong,—
Mingled and murmured in that farewell song.

1844.

BARCLAY OF URY.

Among the earliest converts to the doctrines of Friends in Scotland was Barclay of Ury, an old and distinguished soldier, who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, in Germany. As a Quaker, he became the object of persecution and abuse at the hands of the magistrates and the populace. None bore the indignities of the mob with greater patience and nobleness of soul than this once proud gentleman and soldier. One of his friends, on an occasion of uncommon rudeness, lamented that he should be treated so harshly in his old age who had been so honored before. 'I find more satisfaction,' said Barclay, 'as well as honor, in being thus insulted for my religious principles, than when, a few years ago, it was usual for the magistrates, as I passed the city of Aberdeen, to meet me on the road and conduct me to public entertainment in their hall, and then escort me out again, to gain my favor.'

Up the streets of Aberdeen,
By the kirk and college green,
Rode the Laird of Ury;
Close behind him, close beside,
Foul of mouth and evil-eyed,
Pressed the mob in fury.

Flouted him the drunken churl,
Jeered at him the serving-girl,
Prompt to please her master;
And the begging carlin, late
Fed and clothed at Ury's gate,
Cursed him as he passed her.

Yet, with calm and stately mien,
Up the streets of Aberdeen
Came he slowly riding;
And, to all he saw and heard,
Answering not with bitter word,
Turning not for chiding.

Came a troop with broadswords swinging,
Bits and bridles sharply ringing,
Loose and free and froward;
Quoth the foremost, 'Ride him down!
Push him! prick him! through the town
Drive the Quaker coward!'

But from out the thickening crowd
Cried a sudden voice and loud:
'Barclay! Ho! a Barclay!'
And the old man at his side
Saw a comrade, battle tried,
Scarred and sunburned darkly;

Who with ready weapon bare,
Fronting to the troopers there,
Cried aloud: 'God save us,
Call ye coward him who stood
Ankle deep in Lützen's blood,
With the brave Gustavus?'

'Nay, I do not need thy sword,
Comrade mine,' said Ury's lord;
'Put it up, I pray thee:
Passive to His holy will,
Trust I in my Master still,
Even though He slay me.

'Pledges of thy love and faith,
Proved on many a field of death,
Not by me are needed.'

Marvelled much that henchman bold,
That his laird, so stout of old,
Now so meekly pleaded.

'Woe's the day!' he sadly said,
With a slowly shaking head,
And a look of pity;
'Ury's honest lord reviled,
Mock of knave and sport of child,
In his own good city!

'Speak the word, and, master mine,
As we charged on Tilly's line[10],
And his Walloon lancers,
Smiting through their midst we'll teach
Civil look and decent speech
To these boyish prancers!'

'Marvel not, mine ancient friend,
Like beginning, like the end,'
Quoth the Laird of Ury;
'Is the sinful servant more
Than his gracious Lord who bore
Bonds and stripes in Jewry?

'Give me joy that in His name
I can bear, with patient frame,
All these vain ones offer;
While for them He suffereth long,
Shall I answer wrong with wrong,
Scoffing with the scoffer?

'Happier I, with loss of all,
Hunted, outlawed, held in thrall,
With few friends to greet me,
Than when reeve and squire were seen,
Riding out from Aberdeen,
With bared heads to meet me.

'When each goodwife, o'er and o'er,
Blessed me as I passed her door;
And the snooded daughter,
Through her casement glancing down,
Smiled on him who bore renown
From red fields of slaughter.

'Hard to feel the stranger's scoff,
Hard the old friend's falling off,
Hard to learn forgiving;
But the Lord His own rewards,
And His love with theirs accords,
Warm and fresh and living.

'Through this dark and stormy night
Faith beholds a feeble light
Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God's own time is best,
In a patient hope I rest
For the full day-breaking!'

So the Laird of Ury said,
Turning slow his horse's head
Towards the Tolbooth prison,
Where, through iron gates, he heard
Poor disciples of the Word
Preach of Christ arisen!

Not in vain, Confessor old,
Unto us the tale is told
Of thy day of trial;
Every age on him who strays
From its broad and beaten ways
Pours its seven-fold vial.

Happy he whose inward ear
Angel comfortings can hear,
O'er the rabble's laughter;
And while Hatred's fagots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set
In the world's wide fallow;
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands from hill and mead
Reap the harvests yellow.

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow;
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
And, on midnight's sky of rain,
Paint the golden morrow!

1847.

THE ANGELS OF BUENA VISTA.

A letter-writer from Mexico during the Mexican war, when detailing some of the incidents at the terrible fight of Buena Vista, mentioned that Mexican women were seen hovering near the field of death, for the purpose of giving aid and succor to the wounded. One poor woman was found surrounded by the maimed and suffering of both armies, ministering to the wants of Americans as well as Mexicans with impartial tenderness.

SPEAK and tell us, our Ximena, looking
northward far away,
O'er the camp of the invaders, o'er the
Mexican array,
Who is losing? who is winning? are they
far or come they near?
Look abroad, and tell us, sister, whither
rolls the storm we hear.

'Down the hills of Angostura still the
storm of battle rolls;
Blood is flowing, men are dying; God
have mercy on their souls!'
Who is losing? who is winning? 'Over
hill and over plain,
I see but smoke of cannon clouding
through the mountain rain.'

Holy Mother! keep our brothers! Look,
Ximena, look once more.
'Still I see the fearful whirlwind rolling
darkly as before,
Bearing on, in strange confusion, friend
and foeman, foot and horse,
Like some wild and troubled torrent
sweeping down its mountain course.'

Look forth once more, Ximena! 'Ah!
the smoke has rolled away;
And I see the Northern rifles gleaming
down the ranks of gray.
Hark! that sudden blast of bugles! there
the troop of Minon wheels;
There the Northern horses thunder, with
the cannon at their heels.

'Jesu, pity! how it thickens! now retreat
and now advance!
Right against the blazing cannon shivers
Puebla's charging lance!
Down they go, the brave young riders;
horse and foot together fall;
Like a ploughshare in the fallow, through
them ploughs the Northern ball.'

Nearer came the storm and nearer, rolling
fast and frightful on!
Speak, Ximena, speak and tell us, who
has lost, and who has won?

'Alas! alas! I know not; friend and foe
together fall,
O'er the dying rush the living: pray, my
sisters, for them all!

'Lo! the wind the smoke is lifting.
Blessed Mother, save my brain!
I can see the wounded crawling slowly
out from heaps of slain.
Now they stagger, blind and bleeding;
now they fall, and strive to rise;
Hasten, sisters, haste and save them, lest
they die before our eyes!

'O my heart's love! O my dear one!
lay thy poor head on my knee;
Dost thou know the lips that kiss thee?
Canst thou hear me? canst thou
see?
O my husband, brave and gentle! O my
Bernal, look once more
On the blessed cross before thee! Mercy!
mercy! all is o'er!'

Dry thy tears, my poor Ximena; lay thy
dear one down to rest;
Let his hands be meekly folded, lay the
cross upon his breast;
Let his dirge be sung hereafter, and his
funeral masses said;
To-day, thou poor bereaved one, the living
ask thy aid.

Close beside her, faintly moaning, fair
and young, a soldier lay,
Torn with shot and pierced with lances,
bleeding slow his life away;
But, as tenderly before him the lorn
Ximena knelt,
She saw the Northern eagle shining on
his pistol-belt.

With a stifled cry of horror straight she
turned away her head;
With a sad and bitter feeling looked she
back upon her dead;
But she heard the youth's low moaning,
and his struggling breath of pain,
And she raised the cooling water to his
parching lips again.

Whispered low the dying soldier, pressed
her hand and faintly smiled;
Was that pitying face his mother's? did
she watch beside her child?
All his stranger words with meaning her
woman's heart supplied;
With her kiss upon his forehead, 'Mother!' murmured he, and died!

'A bitter curse upon them, poor boy, who
led thee forth,
From some gentle, sad-eyed mother,
weeping, lonely, in the North!'
Spake the mournful Mexic woman, as
she laid him with her dead,
And turned to soothe the living, and bind
the wounds which bled.

Look forth once more, Ximena! 'Like
a cloud before the wind
Rolls the battle down the mountains,
leaving blood and death behind;
Ah! they plead in vain for mercy; in the
dust the wounded strive;
Hide your faces, holy angels! O thou
Christ of God, forgive!'

Sink, O Night, among thy mountains!
let the cool, gray shadows fall;
Dying brothers, fighting demons, drop
thy curtain over all!
Through the thickening winter twilight,
wide apart the battle rolled,
In its sheath the sabre rested, and the
cannon's lips grew cold.

But the noble Mexic women still their
holy task pursued,
Through that long, dark night of sorrow,
worn and faint and lacking food.
Over weak and suffering brothers, with
a tender care they hung,
And the dying foeman blessed them in
a strange and Northern tongue.

Not wholly lost, O Father! is this evil
world of ours;
Upward, through its blood and ashes,
spring afresh the Eden flowers;
From its smoking hell of battle, Love and
Pity send their prayer,
And still thy white-winged angels hover
dimly in our air!

1847.

THE LEGEND OF ST. MARK.

'This legend [to which my attention was called by my friend Charles Sumner], is the subject of a celebrated picture by Tintoretto, of which Mr. Rogers possesses the original sketch. The slave lies on the ground, amid a crowd of spectators, who look on, animated by all the various emotions of sympathy, rage, terror; a woman, in front, with a child in her arms, has always been admired for the lifelike vivacity of her attitude and expression. The executioner holds up the broken implements; St. Mark, with a headlong movement, seems to rush down from heaven in haste to save his worshipper. The dramatic grouping in this picture is wonderful; the coloring, in its gorgeous depth and harmony, is, in Mr. Rogers's sketch, finer than in the picture.'—Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*, i. 154.

The day is closing dark and cold,
With roaring blast and sleety showers;
And through the dusk the lilacs wear
The bloom of snow, instead of flowers.

I turn me from the gloom without,
To ponder o'er a tale of old;
A legend of the age of Faith,
By dreaming monk or abbess told.

On Tintoretto's canvas lives
That fancy of a loving heart,
In graceful lines and shapes of power,
And hues immortal as his art.

In Provence (so the story runs)
There lived a lord, to whom, as slave,
A peasant-boy of tender years
The chance of trade or conquest gave.

Forth-looking from the castle tower,
Beyond the hills with almonds dark,
The straining eye could scarce discern
The chapel of the good St. Mark.

And there, when bitter word or fare
The service of the youth repaid,
By stealth, before that holy shrine,
For grace to bear his wrong, he prayed.

The steed stamped at the castle gate,
The boar-hunt sounded on the hill;
Why stayed the Baron from the chase,
With looks so stern, and words so ill?

'Go, bind yon slave! and let him learn,
By scath of fire and strain of cord,
How ill they speed who give dead saints
The homage due their living lord!'

They bound him on the fearful rack,
When, through the dungeon's vaulted dark,
He saw the light of shining robes,
And knew the face of good St. Mark.

Then sank the iron rack apart,
The cords released their cruel clasp,
The pincers, with their teeth of fire,
Fell broken from the torturer's grasp.

And lo! before the Youth and Saint,
Barred door and wall of stone gave way;
And up from bondage and the night
They passed to freedom and the day!

O dreaming monk! thy tale is true;
O painter! true thy pencil's art;
In tones of hope and prophecy,
Ye whisper to my listening heart!

Unheard no burdened heart's appeal
Moans up to God's inclining ear;
Unheeded by His tender eye,
Falls to the earth no sufferer's tear.

For still the Lord alone is God!
The pomp and power of tyrant man
Are scattered at His lightest breath,
Like chaff before the winnower's fan.

Not always shall the slave uplift
His heavy hands to Heaven in vain.
God's angel, like the good St. Mark,
Comes shining down to break his chain!

O weary ones! ye may not see
Your helpers in their downward flight;
Nor hear the sound of silver wings
Slow beating through the hush of night!

But not the less gray Dothan shone,
With sunbright watchers bending low,
That Fear's dim eye beheld alone
The spear-heads of the Syrian foe.

There are, who, like the Seer of old,
Can see the helpers God has sent,
And how life's rugged mountain-side
Is white with many an angel tent!

They hear the heralds whom our Lord
Sends down His pathway to prepare;
And light, from others hidden, shines
On their high place of faith and prayer.

Let such, for earth's despairing ones,
Hopeless, yet longing to be free,
Breathe once again the Prophet's prayer:
'Lord, ope their eyes, that they may see!'

1849.

KATHLEEN.

This ballad was originally published in my prose work, *Leaves from Margaret Smith's Journal*, as the song of a wandering Milesian schoolmaster. In the seventeenth century slavery in the New World was by no means confined to the natives of Africa. Political offenders and criminals were transported by the British government to the plantations of Barbadoes and Virginia, where they were sold like cattle in the market. Kidnapping of free and innocent white persons was practised to a considerable extent in the seaports of the United Kingdom.

O Norah, lay your basket down,
And rest your weary hand,
And come and hear me sing a song
Of our old Ireland.

There was a lord of Galaway,
A mighty lord was he;
And he did wed a second wife,
A maid of low degree.

But he was old, and she was young,
And so, in evil spite,
She baked the black bread for his kin,
And fed her own with white.

She whipped the maids and starved the kern,
And drove away the poor;
'Ah, woe is me!' the old lord said,
'I rue my bargain sore!'

This lord he had a daughter fair,
Beloved of old and young,
And nightly round the shealing-fires
Of her the gleeman sung.

'As sweet and good is young Kathleen
As Eve before her fall;'
So sang the harper at the fair,
So harped he in the hall.

'Oh, come to me, my daughter dear!
Come sit upon my knee,
For looking in your face, Kathleen,
Your mother's own I see!'

He smoothed and smoothed her hair away,
He kissed her forehead fair;
'It is my darling Mary's brow,
It is my darling's hair!'

Oh, then spake up the angry dame
'Get up, get up,' quoth she,
'I'll sell ye over Ireland,
I'll sell ye o'er the sea!'

She clipped her glossy hair away,
That none her rank might know,
She took away her gown of silk,
And gave her one of tow,

And sent her down to Limerick town
And to a seaman sold
This daughter of an Irish lord
For ten good pounds in gold.

The lord he smote upon his breast,
And tore his beard so gray;
But he was old, and she was young,
And so she had her way.

Sure that same night the Banshee howled
To fright the evil dame,
And fairy folks, who loved Kathleen,
With funeral torches came.

She watched them glancing through the trees,
And glimmering down the hill;
They crept before the dead-vault door,
And there they all stood still!

'Get up, old man! the wake-lights
shine!'
'Ye murthering witch,' quoth he,
'So I'm rid of your tongue, I little care
If they shine for you or me.'

'Oh, whoso brings my daughter back,
My gold and land shall have!'
Oh, then spake up his handsome page,
'No gold nor land I crave!

'But give to me your daughter dear,
Give sweet Kathleen to me,
Be she on sea or be she on land,
I'll bring her back to thee.'

'My daughter is a lady born,
And you of low degree,
But she shall be your bride the day
You bring her back to me.'

He sailëd east, he sailëd west,
And far and long sailed he,
Until he came to Boston town,
Across the great salt sea.

'Oh, have ye seen the young Kathleen,
The flower of Ireland?
Ye'll know her by her eyes so blue,
And by her snow-white hand!'

Out spake an ancient man, 'I know
The maiden whom ye mean;
I bought her of a Limerick man,
And she is called Kathleen.

'No skill hath she in household work,
Her hands are soft and white,
Yet well by loving looks and ways
She doth her cost requite.'

So up they walkëd through Boston town,
And met a maiden fair,
A little basket on her arm
So snowy-white and bare.

'Come hither, child, and say hast thou
This young man ever seen?'
They wept within each other's arms,
The page and young Kathleen.

'Oh give to me this darling child,
And take my purse of gold.'
'Nay, not by me,' her master said,
'Shall sweet Kathleen be sold.

'We loved her in the place of one
The Lord hath early ta'en;
But, since her heart's in Ireland,
We give her back again!'

Oh, for that same the saints in heaven
For his poor soul shall pray,
And Mary Mother wash with tears
His heresies away.

Sure now they dwell in Ireland;
As you go up Claremore
Ye'll see their castle looking down
The pleasant Galway shore.

And the old lord's wife is dead and gone,
And a happy man is he,
For he sits beside his own Kathleen,
With her darling on his knee.

1849.

THE WELL OF LOCH MAREE.

Pennant, in his *Voyage to the Hebrides*, describes the holy well of Loch Maree, the waters of which were supposed to effect a miraculous cure of melancholy, trouble, and insanity.

CALM on the breast of Loch Maree
A little isle reposes;
A shadow woven of the oak
And willow o'er it closes.

Within, a Druid's mound is seen,
Set round with stony warders;
A fountain, gushing through the turf,
Flows o'er its grassy borders.

And whoso bathes therein his brow,
With care or madness burning,
Feels once again his healthful thought
And sense of peace returning.

O restless heart and fevered brain,
Unquiet and unstable,
That holy well of Loch Maree
Is more than idle fable!

Life's changes vex, its discords stun,
Its glaring sunshine blindeth,
And blest is he who on his way
That fount of healing findeth!

The shadows of a humbled will
And contrite heart are o'er it;
Go read its legend, 'TRUST IN GOD,'
On Faith's white stones before it.

1850.

THE CHAPEL OF THE HERMITS.

The incident upon which this poem is based is related in a note to Bernardin Henri Saint Pierre's *Études de la Nature*.

'We arrived at the habitation of the Hermits a little before they sat down to their table, and while they were still at church. J. J. Rousseau proposed to me to offer up our devotions. The hermits were reciting the Litanies of Providence, which are remarkably beautiful. After we had addressed our prayers to God, and the hermits were proceeding to the refectory, Rousseau said to me, with his heart overflowing, "At this moment I experience what is said in the gospel: *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* There is here a feeling of peace and happiness which penetrates the soul." I said, "If Fénelon had lived, you would have been a Catholic." He exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Oh, if Fénelon were alive, I would struggle to get into his service, even as a lackey!"'

In my sketch of Saint Pierre, it will be seen that I have somewhat antedated the period of his old age. At that time he was not probably more than fifty. In describing him, I have by no means exaggerated his own history of his mental condition at the period of the story. In the fragmentary Sequel to his *Studies of Nature*, he thus speaks of himself: 'The ingratitude of those of whom I had deserved kindness, unexpected family misfortunes, the total loss of my small patrimony through enterprises solely undertaken for the benefit of my country, the debts under which I lay oppressed, the blasting of all my hopes,—these combined calamities made dreadful inroads upon my health and reason. . . . I found it impossible to continue in a room where there was company, especially if the doors were shut. I could not even cross an alley in a public garden, if several persons had got together in it. When alone, my malady subsided. I felt myself likewise at ease in places where I saw children only. At the sight of any one walking up to the place where I was, I felt my whole frame agitated, and retired. I often said to myself, "My sole study has been to merit well of mankind; why do I fear them?"'

He attributes his improved health of mind and body to the counsels of his friend, J. J. Rousseau. 'I renounced,' says he, 'my books. I threw my eyes upon the works of nature, which spake to all my senses a language which neither time nor nations have it in their power to alter. Thenceforth my histories and my journals were the herbage of the fields and meadows. My thoughts did not go forth painfully after them, as in the case of human systems; but their thoughts, under a thousand engaging forms, quietly sought me. In these I studied, without effort, the laws of that Universal Wisdom which had surrounded me from the cradle, but on which heretofore I had bestowed little attention.'

Speaking of Rousseau, he says: 'I derived inexpressible satisfaction from his society. What I prized still more than his genius was his probity. He was one of the few literary characters, tried in the furnace of affliction, to whom you could, with perfect security, confide your most secret thoughts. . . . Even when he deviated, and became the victim of himself or of others, he could forget his own misery in devotion to the welfare of mankind. He was uniformly the advocate of the miserable. There might be inscribed on his tomb these affecting words from that Book of which he carried always about him some select passages, during the last years of his life: *His sins, which are many, are forgiven, for he loved much.*'

'I do believe, and yet, in grief,
I pray for help to unbelief;
For needful strength aside to lay
The daily cumberings of my way.

'I'm sick at heart of craft and cant,
Sick of the crazed enthusiast's rant,
Profession's smooth hypocrisies,
And creeds of iron, and lives of ease.

'I ponder o'er the sacred word,
I read the record of our Lord;
And, weak and troubled, envy them
Who touched His seamless garment's hem;

'Who saw the tears of love He wept
Above the grave where Lazarus slept;
And heard, amidst the shadows dim
Of Olivet, His evening hymn.

'How blessed the swineherd's low estate,
The beggar crouching at the gate,
The leper loathly and abhorred,
Whose eyes of flesh beheld the Lord!

'O sacred soil His sandals pressed!
Sweet fountains of His noonday rest!
O light and air of Palestine,
Impregnate with His life divine!

'Oh, bear me thither! Let me look
On Siloa's pool, and Kedron's brook;
Kneel at Gethsemane, and by
Gennesaret walk, before I die!

'Methinks this cold and northern night
Would melt before that Orient light;
And, wet by Hermon's dew and rain,
My childhood's faith revive again!'

So spake my friend, one autumn day,
Where the still river slid away
Beneath us, and above the brown
Red curtains of the woods shut down.

Then said I,—for I could not brook
The mute appealing of his look,—
'I too am weak, and faith is small,
And blindness happeneth unto all.

'Yet sometimes glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong, the eternal right;
And, step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man;

'That all of good the past hath had
Remains to make our own time glad,
Our common daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine.

'Thou weariest of thy present state;
What gain to thee time's holiest date?
The doubter now perchance had been
As High Priest or as Pilate then!

'What thought Chorazin's scribes? What faith
In Him had Nain and Nazareth?
Of the few followers whom He led
One sold Him,—all forsook and fled.

'O friend! we need nor rock nor sand,
Nor storied stream of Morning-Land;
The heavens are glassed in Merrimac,—
What more could Jordan render back?

'We lack but open eye and ear
To find the Orient's marvels here;
The still small voice in autumn's hush,
Yon maple wood the burning bush.

'For still the new transcends the old,
In signs and tokens manifold;
Slaves rise up men; the olive waves,
With roots deep set in battle graves!

'Through the harsh noises of our day
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking, calm and clear.

'That song of Love, now low and far,
Erelong shall swell from star to star!
That light, the breaking day, which tips
The golden-spired Apocalypse!'

Then, when my good friend shook his head,
And, sighing, sadly smiled, I said:
'Thou mind'st me of a story told
In rare Bernardin's leaves of gold.'

And while the slanted sunbeams wove
The shadows of the frost-stained grove,
And, picturing all, the river ran
O'er cloud and wood, I thus began:—

In Mount Valerien's chestnut wood
The Chapel of the Hermits stood;
And thither, at the close of day,
Came two old pilgrims, worn and gray.

One, whose impetuous youth defied
The storms of Baikal's wintry side,
And mused and dreamed where tropic day
Flamed o'er his lost Virginia's bay.

His simple tale of love and woe
All hearts had melted, high or low;—
A blissful pain, a sweet distress,
Immortal in its tenderness.

Yet, while above his charmed page
Beat quick the young heart of his age,
He walked amidst the crowd unknown,
A sorrowing old man, strange and lone.

A homeless, troubled age,—the gray
Pale setting of a weary day;
Too dull his ear for voice of praise,
Too sadly worn his brow for bays.

Pride, lust of power and glory, slept;
Yet still his heart its young dream kept,
And, wandering like the deluge-dove,
Still sought the resting-place of love.

And, mateless, childless, envied more
The peasant's welcome from his door
By smiling eyes at eventide,
Than kingly gifts or lettered pride.

Until, in place of wife and child,
All-pitying Nature on him smiled,
And gave to him the golden keys
To all her inmost sanctities.

Mild Druid of her wood-paths dim!
She laid her great heart bare to him,
Its loves and sweet accords;—he saw
The beauty of her perfect law.

The language of her signs he knew,
What notes her cloudy clarion blew;
The rhythm of autumn's forest dyes,
The hymn of sunset's painted skies.

And thus he seemed to hear the song
Which swept, of old, the stars along;
And to his eyes the earth once more
Its fresh and primal beauty wore.

Who sought with him, from summer air,
And field and wood, a balm for care;
And bathed in light of sunset skies
His tortured nerves and weary eyes?

His fame on all the winds had flown;
His words had shaken crypt and throne;
Like fire on camp and court and cell
They dropped, and kindled as they fell.

Beneath the pomps of state, below
The mitred juggler's masque and show,
A prophecy, a vague hope, ran
His burning thought from man to man.

For peace or rest too well he saw
The fraud of priests, the wrong of law,
And felt how hard, between the two,
Their breath of pain the millions drew.

A prophet-utterance, strong and wild,
The weakness of an unweaned child,
A sun-bright hope for human-kind,
And self-despair, in him combined.

He loathed the false, yet lived not true
To half the glorious truths he knew;
The doubt, the discord, and the sin,
He mourned without, he felt within.

Untrod by him the path he showed,
Sweet pictures on his easel glowed
Of simple faith, and loves of home,
And virtue's golden days to come.

But weakness, shame, and folly made
The foil to all his pen portrayed;
Still, where his dreamy splendors shone,
The shadow of himself was thrown.

Lord, what is man, whose thought, at times,
Up to Thy sevenfold brightness climbs,
While still his grosser instinct clings
To earth, like other creeping things!

So rich in words, in acts so mean;
So high, so low; chance-swung between
The foulness of the penal pit
And Truth's clear sky, millennium-lit!

Vain, pride of star-lent genius!—vain,
Quick fancy and creative brain,
Unblest by prayerful sacrifice,
Absurdly great, or weakly wise!

Midst yearnings for a truer life,
Without were fears, within was strife;
And still his wayward act denied
The perfect good for which he sighed.

The love he sent forth void returned;
The fame that crowned him scorched and burned,
Burning, yet cold and drear and lone,—
A fire-mount in a frozen zone![11]

Like that the gray-haired sea-king passed,
Seen southward from his sleety mast,
About whose brows of changeless frost
A wreath of flame the wild winds tossed.

Far round the mournful beauty played
Of lambent light and purple shade,
Lost on the fixed and dumb despair
Of frozen earth and sea and air!

A man apart, unknown, unloved
By those whose wrongs his soul had moved,
He bore the ban of Church and State,
The good man's fear, the bigot's hate!

Forth from the city's noise and throng,
Its pomp and shame, its sin and wrong,
The twain that summer day had strayed
To Mount Valerien's chestnut shade.

To them the green fields and the wood
Lent something of their quietude,
And golden-tinted sunset seemed
Prophetical of all they dreamed.

The hermits from their simple cares
The bell was calling home to prayers,
And, listening to its sound, the twain
Seemed lapped in childhood's trust again.

Wide open stood the chapel door;
A sweet old music, swelling o'er
Low prayerful murmurs, issued thence,—
The Litanies of Providence!

Then Rousseau spake: 'Where two or three
In His name meet, He there will be!'
And then, in silence, on their knees
They sank beneath the chestnut trees.

As to the blind returning light,
As daybreak to the Arctic night,
Old faith revived; the doubts of years
Dissolved in reverential tears.

That gush of feeling overpast,
'Ah me!' Bernardin sighed at last,
'I would thy bitterest foes could see
Thy heart as it is seen of me!

'No church of God hast thou denied;
Thou hast but spurned in scorn aside
A bare and hollow counterfeit,
Profaning the pure name of it!

'With dry dead moss and marish weeds
His fire the western herdsman feeds,
And greener from the ashen plain
The sweet spring grasses rise again.

'Nor thunder-peal nor mighty wind
Disturb the solid sky behind;
And through the cloud the red bolt rends
The calm, still smile of Heaven descends!

'Thus through the world, like bolt and blast,
And scourging fire, thy words have passed.
Clouds break,—the steadfast heavens remain;
Weeds burn,—the ashes feed the grain!

'But whoso strives with wrong may find
Its touch pollute, its darkness blind;
And learn, as latent fraud is shown
In others' faith, to doubt his own.

'With dream and falsehood, simple trust
And pious hope we tread in dust;
Lost the calm faith in goodness,—lost
The baptism of the Pentecost!

'Alas!—the blows for error meant
Too oft on truth itself are spent,
As through the false and vile and base
Looks forth her sad, rebuking face.

'Not ours the Theban's charmëd life;
We come not scathless from the strife!
The Python's coil about us clings,
The trampled Hydra bites and stings!

'Meanwhile, the sport of seeming chance,
The plastic shapes of circumstance,
What might have been we fondly guess,
If earlier born, or tempted less.

'And thou, in these wild, troubled days,
Misjudged alike in blame and praise,
Unsought and undeserved the same
The skeptic's praise, the bigot's blame;—

'I cannot doubt, if thou hadst been
Among the highly favored men
Who walked on earth with Fénelon,
He would have owned thee as his son;

'And, bright with wings of cherubim
Visibly waving over him,
Seen through his life, the Church had seemed
All that its old confessors dreamed.'

'I would have been,' Jean Jacques replied,
'The humblest servant at his side,
Obscure, unknown, content to see
How beautiful man's life may be!

'Oh, more than thrice-blest relic, more
Than solemn rite or sacred lore,
The holy life of one who trod
The foot-marks of the Christ of God!

'Amidst a blinded world he saw
The oneness of the Dual law;
That Heaven's sweet peace on Earth began,
And God was loved through love of man.

'He lived the Truth which reconciled
The strong man Reason, Faith the child;
In him belief and act were one,
The homilies of duty done!'

So speaking, through the twilight gray
The two old pilgrims went their way.
What seeds of life that day were sown,
The heavenly watchers knew alone.

Time passed, and Autumn came to fold
Green Summer in her brown and gold;
Time passed, and Winter's tears of snow
Dropped on the grave-mound of Rousseau.

'The tree remaineth where it fell,
The pained on earth is pained in hell!'
So priestcraft from its altars cursed
The mournful doubts its falsehood nursed.

Ah! well of old the Psalmist prayed,
'Thy hand, not man's, on me be laid!'
Earth frowns below, Heaven weeps above,
And man is hate, but God is love!

No Hermits now the wanderer sees,
Nor chapel with its chestnut-trees;
A morning dream, a tale that's told,
The wave of change o'er all has rolled.

Yet lives the lesson of that day;
And from its twilight cool and gray
Comes up a low, sad whisper, 'Make
The truth thine own, for truth's own sake.

'Why wait to see in thy brief span
Its perfect flower and fruit in man?
No saintly touch can save; no balm
Of healing hath the martyr's palm.

'Midst soulless forms, and false pretence
Of spiritual pride and pampered sense,
A voice saith, "What is that to thee?
Be true thyself, and follow Me!"

'In days when throne and altar heard
The wanton's wish, the bigot's word,
And pomp of state and ritual show
Scarce hid the loathsome death below,—

'Midst fawning priests and courtiers foul,
The losel swarm of crown and cowl,
White-robed walked François Fénelon,
Stainless as Uriel in the sun!

'Yet in his time the stake blazed red,
The poor were eaten up like bread:
Men knew him not; his garment's hem
No healing virtue had for them.

'Alas! no present saint we find;
The white cymar gleams far behind,
Revealed in outline vague, sublime,
Through telescopic mists of time!

'Trust not in man with passing breath,
But in the Lord, old Scripture saith;
The truth which saves thou mayst not blend
With false professor, faithless friend.

'Search thine own heart. What paineth thee
In others in thyself may be;
All dust is frail, all flesh is weak;
Be thou the true man thou dost seek!

'Where now with pain thou treadest, trod
The whitest of the saints of God!
To show thee where their feet were set,
The light which led them shineth yet.

'The footprints of the life divine,
Which marked their path, remain in thine;
And that great Life, transfused in theirs,
Awaits thy faith, thy love, thy prayers!'

A lesson which I well may heed,
A word of fitness to my need;
So from that twilight cool and gray
Still saith a voice, or seems to say.

We rose, and slowly homeward turned,
While down the west the sunset burned;
And, in its light, hill, wood, and tide,
And human forms seemed glorified.

The village homes transfigured stood,
And purple bluffs, whose belting wood
Across the waters leaned to hold
The yellow leaves like lamps of gold.

Then spake my friend: 'Thy words are true;
Forever old, forever new,
These home-seen splendors are the same
Which over Eden's sunsets came.

'To these bowed heavens let wood and hill
Lift voiceless praise and anthem still;
Fall, warm with blessing, over them,
Light of the New Jerusalem!

'Flow on, sweet river, like the stream
Of John's Apocalyptic dream!
This mapled ridge shall Horeb be,
Yon green-banked lake our Galilee!

'Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more
For olden time and holier shore;
God's love and blessing, then and there,
Are now and here and everywhere.'

1851.

TAULER.

Tauler, the preacher, walked, one autumn day,
Without the walls of Strasburg, by the Rhine,
Pondering the solemn Miracle of Life;
As one who, wandering in a starless night,
Feels momently the jar of unseen waves,
And hears the thunder of an unknown sea,
Breaking along an unimagined shore.

And as he walked he prayed. Even the same
Old prayer with which, for half a score of years,
Morning, and noon, and evening, lip and heart
Had groaned: 'Have pity upon me, Lord!
Thou seest, while teaching others, I am blind.
Send me a man who can direct my steps!'

Then, as he mused, he heard along his path
A sound as of an old man's staff among
The dry, dead linden-leaves; and, looking up,
He saw a stranger, weak, and poor, and old.

'Peace be unto thee, father!' Tauler said,
'God give thee a good day!' The old man raised
Slowly his calm blue eyes. 'I thank thee, son;
But all my days are good, and none are ill.'

Wondering thereat, the preacher spake again,
'God give thee happy life.' The old man smiled,
'I never am unhappy.'

Tauler laid
His hand upon the stranger's coarse gray sleeve:
'Tell me, O father, what thy strange words mean.
Surely man's days are evil, and his life
Sad as the grave it leads to.' 'Nay, my son,
Our times are in God's hands, and all our days
Are as our needs; for shadow as for sun,
For cold as heat, for want as wealth, alike
Our thanks are due, since that is best which is;
And that which is not, sharing not His life,
Is evil only as devoid of good.
And for the happiness of which I spake,
I find it in submission to His will,
And calm trust in the holy Trinity
Of Knowledge, Goodness, and Almighty Power.'

Silently wondering, for a little space,
Stood the great preacher; then he spake as one
Who, suddenly grappling with a haunting thought
Which long has followed, whispering through the dark
Strange terrors, drags it, shrieking, into light:
'What if God's will consign thee hence to Hell?'

'Then,' said the stranger, cheerily, 'be it so.
What Hell may be I know not; this I know,—
I cannot lose the presence of the Lord.
One arm, Humility, takes hold upon
His dear Humanity; the other, Love,
Clasps his Divinity. So where I go
He goes; and better fire-walled Hell with Him
Than golden-gated Paradise without.'

Tears sprang in Tauler's eyes. A sudden light,
Like the first ray which fell on chaos, clove
Apart the shadow wherein he had walked
Darkly at noon. And, as the strange old man
Went his slow way, until his silver hair
Set like the white moon where the hills of vine
Slope to the Rhine, he bowed his head and said:
'My prayer is answered. God hath sent the man
Long sought, to teach me, by his simple trust,
Wisdom the weary schoolmen never knew.'

So, entering with a changed and cheerful step
The city gates, he saw, far down the street,
A mighty shadow break the light of noon,
Which tracing backward till its airy lines
Hardened to stony plinths, he raised his eyes
O'er broad façade and lofty pediment,
O'er architrave and frieze and sainted niche,
Up the stone lace-work chiselled by the wise
Erwin of Steinbach, dizzily up to where
In the noon-brightness the great Minster's tower,
Jewelled with sunbeams on its mural crown,
Rose like a visible prayer. 'Behold!' he said,
'The stranger's faith made plain before mine eyes.
As yonder tower outstretches to the earth
The dark triangle of its shade alone
When the clear day is shining on its top,
So, darkness in the pathway of Man's life
Is but the shadow of God's providence,
By the great Sun of Wisdom cast thereon;
And what is dark below is light in Heaven.'

1853.

THE HERMIT OF THE THEBAID.

O STRONG, upwelling prayers of faith,
From inmost founts of life ye start,—
The spirit's pulse, the vital breath
Of soul and heart!

From pastoral toil, from traffic's din,
Alone, in crowds, at home, abroad,
Unheard of man, ye enter in
The ear of God.

Ye brook no forced and measured tasks,
Nor weary rote, nor formal chains;
The simple heart, that freely asks
In love, obtains.

For man the living temple is:
The mercy-seat and cherubim,
And all the holy mysteries,
He bears with him.

And most avails the prayer of love,
Which, wordless, shapes itself in deeds,
And wearies Heaven for naught above
Our common needs.

Which brings to God's all-perfect will
That trust of His undoubting child
Whereby all seeming good and ill
Are reconciled.

And, seeking not for special signs
Of favor, is content to fall
Within the providence which shines
And rains on all.

Alone, the Thebaid hermit leaned
At noontime o'er the sacred word.
Was it an angel or a fiend
Whose voice he heard?

It broke the desert's hush of awe,
A human utterance, sweet and mild;
And, looking up, the hermit saw
A little child.

A child, with wonder-widened eyes,
O'erawed and troubled by the sight
Of hot, red sands, and brazen skies,
And anchorite.

'What dost thou here, poor man? No shade
Of cool, green palms, nor grass, nor well,
Nor corn, nor vines.' The hermit said:
'With God I dwell.

'Alone with Him in this great calm,
I live not by the outward sense;
My Nile His love, my sheltering palm
His providence.'

The child gazed round him. 'Does God live
Here only?—where the desert's rim
Is green with corn, at morn and eve,
We pray to Him.

'My brother tills beside the Nile
His little field; beneath the leaves
My sisters sit and spin, the while
My mother weaves.

'And when the millet's ripe heads fall,
And all the bean-field hangs in pod,
My mother smiles, and says that all
Are gifts from God.

'And when to share our evening meal,
She calls the stranger at the door,
She says God fills the hands that deal
Food to the poor.'

Adown the hermit's wasted cheeks
Glistened the flow of human tears;
'Dear Lord!' he said, 'Thy angel speaks,
Thy servant hears.'

Within his arms the child he took,
And thought of home and life with men;
And all his pilgrim feet forsook
Returned again.

The palmy shadows cool and long,
The eyes that smiled through lavish locks,
Home's cradle-hymn and harvest-song,
And bleat of flocks.

'O child!' he said, 'thou teachest me
There is no place where God is not;
That love will make, where'er it be,
A holy spot.'

He rose from off the desert sand,
And, leaning on his staff of thorn,
Went with the young child hand in hand,
Like night with morn.

They crossed the desert's burning line,
And heard the palm-tree's rustling fan,
The Nile-bird's cry, the low of kine,
And voice of man.

Unquestioning, his childish guide
He followed, as the small hand led
To where a woman, gentle-eyed,
Her distaff fed.

She rose, she clasped her truant boy,
She thanked the stranger with her eyes;
The hermit gazed in doubt and joy
And dumb surprise.

And lo!—with sudden warmth and light
A tender memory thrilled his frame;
New-born, the world-lost anchorite
A man became.

'O sister of El Zara's race,
Behold me!—had we not one mother?'
She gazed into the stranger's face:
'Thou art my brother!'

'O kin of blood! Thy life of use
And patient trust is more than mine;
And wiser than the gray recluse
This child of thine.

'For, taught of him whom God hath sent,
That toil is praise, and love is prayer,
I come, life's cares and pains content
With thee to share.'

Even as his foot the threshold crossed,
The hermit's better life began;
Its holiest saint the Thebaid lost,
And found a man!

1854.

MAUD MULLER.

The recollection of some descendants of a Hessian deserter in the Revolutionary war bearing the name of Muller doubtless suggested the somewhat infelicitous title of a New England idyl. The poem had no real foundation in fact, though a hint of it may have been found in recalling an incident, trivial in itself, of a journey on the picturesque Maine seaboard with my sister some years before it was written. We had stopped to rest our tired horse under the shade of an apple-tree, and refresh him with water from a little brook which rippled through the stone wall across the road. A very beautiful young girl in scantest summer attire was at work in the hay-field, and as we talked with her we noticed that she strove to hide her bare feet by raking hay over them, blushing as she did so, through the tan of her cheek and neck.

Maud Muller on a summer's day,
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.

But when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast,—

A wish that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

And asked a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup,

And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

'Thanks!' said the Judge; 'a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed.'

He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather.

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown,
And her graceful ankles bare and brown;

And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: 'Ah me!
That I the Judge's bride might be!

'He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

'My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat.

'I'd dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.

'And I'd feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door.'

The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still.

'A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne'er hath it been my lot to meet.

'And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair.

'Would she were mine, and I to-day,
Like her, a harvester of hay;

'No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

'But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words.'

But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold,
And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone.

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in court an old love-tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go;

And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise.

Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;

And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.

And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain,
'Ah, that I were free again!

'Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay.'

She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door.

But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft, when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein;

And, gazing down with timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face.

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls;

The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned,

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, 'It might have been.'

Alas for maiden, alas for Judge,
For rich repiner and houschold drudge!

God pity them both! and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'

Ah, well! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes;

And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away!

1854.

MARY GARVIN.

From the heart of Waumbek Methna, from
the lake that never fails,
Falls the Saco in the green lap of Conway's intervales;
There, in wild and virgin freshness, its waters foam and flow,
As when Darby Field first saw them, two hundred years ago.

But, vexed in all its seaward course with bridges, dams, and mills,
How changed is Saco's stream, how lost its freedom of the hills,
Since travelled Jocelyn, factor Vines, and stately Champernoon
Heard on its banks the gray wolf's howl, the trumpet of the loon!

With smoking axle hot with speed, with steeds of fire and steam,
Wide-waked To-day leaves Yesterday behind him like a dream.
Still, from the hurrying train of Life, fly backward far and fast
The milestones of the fathers, the landmarks of the past.

But human hearts remain unchanged: the sorrow and the sin,
The loves and hopes and fears of old, are to our own akin;
And if, in tales our fathers told, the songs our mothers sung,
Tradition wears a snowy beard, Romance is always young.

O sharp-lined man of traffic, on Saco's banks to-day!
O mill-girl watching late and long the shuttle's restless play!
Let, for the once, a listening ear the working hand beguile,
And lend my old Provincial tale, as suits, a tear or smile!

The evening gun had sounded from gray Fort Mary's walls;
Through the forest, like a wild beast, roared and plunged the Saco's falls.

And westward on the sea-wind, that damp and gusty grew,
Over cedars darkening inland the smokes of Spurwink blew.

On the hearth of Farmer Garvin, blazed the crackling walnut log;
Right and left sat dame and goodman, and between them lay the dog,

Head on paws, and tail slow wagging, and beside him on her mat,
Sitting drowsy in the firelight, winked and purred the mottled cat.

'Twenty years!' said Goodman Garvin,
speaking sadly, under breath,
And his gray head slowly shaking, as one
who speaks of death.

The goodwife dropped her needles: 'It is
twenty years to-day,
Since the Indians fell on Saco, and stole
our child away.'

Then they sank into the silence, for each
knew the other's thought,
Of a great and common sorrow, and words
were needed not.

'Who knocks?' cried Goodman Garvin.
The door was open thrown;
On two strangers, man and maiden, cloaked
and furred, the fire-light shone.

One with courteous gesture lifted the bear-
skin from his head;
'Lives here Elkanah Garvin?' 'I am he,'
the goodman said.

'Sit ye down, and dry and warm ye, for
the night is chill with rain.'
And the goodwife drew the settle, and
stirred the fire amain.

The maid unclasped her cloak-hood, the
firelight glistened fair
In her large, moist eyes, and over soft
folds of dark brown hair.

Dame Garvin looked upon her: 'It is
Mary's self I see!
Dear heart!' she cried, 'now tell me, has
my child come back to me?'

'My name indeed is Mary,' said the
stranger sobbing wild;
'Will you be to me a mother? I am Mary
Garvin's child!

'She sleeps by wooded Simcoe, but on her
dying day
She bade my father take me to her kins-
folk far away.

'And when the priest besought her to do
me no such wrong,
She said, "May God forgive me! I have
closed my heart too long.

'"When I hid me from my father, and
shut out my mother's call,
I sinned against those dear ones, and the
Father of us all.

'"Christ's love rebukes no home-love,
breaks no tie of kin apart;
Better heresy in doctrine, than heresy of
heart.

'"Tell me not the Church must censure:
she who wept the Cross beside
Never made her own flesh strangers, nor
the claims of blood denied;

'"And if she who wronged her parents,
with her child atones to them,
Earthly daughter, Heavenly Mother!
thou at least wilt not condemn!"

'So, upon her death-bed lying, my blessed
mother spake;
As we come to do her bidding, so receive
us for her sake.'

'God be praised!' said Goodwife Garvin,
'He taketh, and He gives;
He woundeth, but He healeth; in her
child our daughter lives!'

'Amen!' the old man answered, as he
brushed a tear away,
And, kneeling by his hearthstone, said,
with reverence, 'Let us pray.'

All its Oriental symbols, and its Hebrew
paraphrase,
Warm with earnest life and feeling, rose
his prayer of love and praise.

But he started at beholding, as he rose
from off his knee,
The stranger cross his forehead with the
sign of Papistrie.

'What is this?' cried Farmer Garvin. 'Is
an English Christian's home
A chapel or a mass-house, that you make
the sign of Rome?'

Then the young girl knelt beside him,
kissed his trembling hand, and cried:
'Oh, forbear to chide my father; in that
faith my mother died!

'On her wooden cross at Simcoe the dews
and sunshine fall,
As they fall on Spurwink's graveyard; and
the dear God watches all!'

The old man stroked the fair head that
rested on his knee;
'Your words, dear child,' he answered,
'are God's rebuke to me.

'Creed and rite perchance may differ, yet
our faith and hope be one.
Let me be your father's father, let him be
to me a son.'

When the horn, on Sabbath morning,
through the still and frosty air,
From Spurwink, Pool, and Black Point,
called to sermon and to prayer,

To the goodly house of worship, where,
in order due and fit,
As by public vote directed, classed and
ranked the people sit;

Mistress first and goodwife after, clerkly
squire before the clown,
From the brave coat, lace-embroidered, to
the gray frock, shading down;

From the pulpit read the preacher, 'Good-
man Garvin and his wife
Fain would thank the Lord, whose kind-
ness has followed them through life,

'For the great and crowning mercy, that
their daughter, from the wild,
Where she rests (they hope in God's peace),
has sent to them her child;

'And the prayers of all God's people they
ask, that they may prove
Not unworthy, through their weakness, of
such special proof of love.'

As the preacher prayed, uprising, the
aged couple stood,
And the fair Canadian also, in her modest
maidenhood.

Thought the elders, grave and doubting,
'She is Papist born and bred;'
Thought the young men, ''Tis an angel
in Mary Garvin's stead!'

1856.

THE RANGER.

Originally published as *Martha Mason; a Song of the Old French War.*

Robert Rawlin!—Frosts were falling
When the ranger's horn was calling
Through the woods to Canada.
Gone the winter's sleet and snowing,
Gone the spring-time's bud and blowing,
Gone the summer's harvest mowing,
And again the fields are gray.
Yet away, he's away!
Faint and fainter hope is growing
In the hearts that mourn his stay.

Where the lion, crouching high on
Abraham's rock with teeth of iron,
Glares o'er wood and wave away,
Faintly thence, as pines far sighing,
Or as thunder spent and dying,
Come the challenge and replying,
Come the sounds of flight and fray.
Well-a-day! Hope and pray!
Some are living, some are lying
In their red graves far away.

Straggling rangers, worn with dangers,
Homeward faring, weary strangers
Pass the farm-gate on their way;
Tidings of the dead and living,
Forest march and ambush, giving,
Till the maidens leave their weaving,
And the lads forget their play.
'Still away, still away!'
Sighs a sad one, sick with grieving,
'Why does Robert still delay!'

Nowhere fairer, sweeter, rarer,
Does the golden-locked fruit bearer
Through his painted woodlands stray,
Than where hillside oaks and beeches
Overlook the long, blue reaches,
Silver coves and pebbled beaches,
And green isles of Casco Bay;
Nowhere day, for delay,
With a tenderer look beseeches,
'Let me with my charmed earth stay.'

On the grain-lands of the mainlands
Stands the serried corn like train-bands,
  Plume and pennon rustling gay;
Out at sea, the islands wooded,
Silver birches, golden-hooded,
Set with maples, crimson-blooded,
  White sea-foam and sand-hills gray,
  Stretch away, far away,
Dim and dreamy, over-brooded
  By the hazy autumn day.

Gayly chattering to the clattering
Of the brown nuts downward pattering,
  Leap the squirrels, red and gray.
On the grass-land, on the fallow,
Drop the apples, red and yellow;
Drop the russet pears and mellow,
  Drop the red leaves all the day.
  And away, swift away,
Sun and cloud, o'er hill and hollow
  Chasing, weave their web of play.

'Martha Mason, Martha Mason,
Prithee tell us of the reason
  Why you mope at home to-day:
Surely smiling is not sinning;
Leave your quilling, leave your spinning;
What is all your store of linen,
  If your heart is never gay?
  Come away, come away!
Never yet did sad beginning
  Make the task of life a play.'

Overbending, till she's blending
With the flaxen skein she's tending
  Pale brown tresses smoothed away
From her face of patient sorrow,
Sits she, seeking but to borrow,
From the trembling hope of morrow,
  Solace for the weary day.
  'Go your way, laugh and play;
Unto Him who heeds the sparrow
  And the lily, let me pray.'

'With our rally rings the valley,—
Join us!' cried the blue-eyed Nelly;
  'Join us!' cried the laughing May,
'To the beach we all are going,
And, to save the task of rowing,
West by north the wind is blowing,
  Blowing briskly down the bay!
  Come away, come away!
Time and tide are swiftly flowing,
  Let us take them while we may!

'Never tell us that you 'll fail us,
Where the purple beach-plum mellows
  On the bluffs so wild and gray.
Hasten, for the oars are falling;
Hark, our merry mates are calling;
Time it is that we were all in,
  Singing tideward down the bay!'
  'Nay, nay, let me stay;
Sore and sad for Robert Rawlin
  Is my heart,' she said, 'to-day.'

'Vain your calling for Rob Rawlin!
Some red squaw his moose-meat's broiling,
  Or some French lass, singing gay;
Just forget as he's forgetting;
What avails a life of fretting?
If some stars must needs be setting,
  Others rise as good as they.'
  'Cease, I pray; go your way!'
Martha cries, her eyelids wetting;
  'Foul and false the words you say!'

'Martha Mason, hear to reason!
Prithee, put a kinder face on!'
  'Cease to vex me,' did she say;
'Better at his side be lying,
With the mournful pine-trees sighing,
And the wild birds o'er us crying,
  Than to doubt like mine a prey;
  While away, far away,
Turns my heart, forever trying
  Some new hope for each new day.

'When the shadows veil the meadows,
And the sunset's golden ladders
  Sink from twilight's walls of gray,—
From the window of my dreaming,
I can see his sickle gleaming,
Cheery-voiced, can hear him teaming
  Down the locust-shaded way;
  But away, swift away,
Fades the fond, delusive seeming,
  And I kneel again to pray.

'When the growing dawn is showing,
And the barn-yard cock is crowing,
  And the horned moon pales away:

From a dream of him awaking,
Every sound my heart is making
Seems a footstep of his taking;
Then I hush the thought, and say,
"Nay, nay, he 's away!"
Ah! my heart, my heart is breaking
For the dear one far away.'

Look up, Martha! worn and swarthy,
Glows a face of manhood worthy:
'Robert!' 'Martha!' all they say.
O'er went wheel and reel together,
Little cared the owner whither;
Heart of lead is heart of feather,
Noon of night is noon of day!
Come away, come away!
When such lovers meet each other,
Why should prying idlers stay?

Quench the timber's fallen embers,
Quench the red leaves in December's
Hoary rime and chilly spray.
But the hearth shall kindle clearer,
Household welcomes sound sincerer,
Heart to loving heart draw nearer,
When the bridal bells shall say:
'Hope and pray, trust alway;
Life is sweeter, love is dearer,
For the trial and delay!'

1856.

THE GARRISON OF CAPE ANN.

From the hills of home forth looking, far
beneath the tent-like span
Of the sky, I see the white gleam of the
headland of Cape Ann.
Well I know its coves and beaches to the
ebb-tide glimmering down,
And the white-walled hamlet children of
its ancient fishing-town.

Long has passed the summer morning,
and its memory waxes old,
When along yon breezy headlands with a
pleasant friend I strolled.
Ah! the autumn sun is shining, and the
ocean wind blows cool,
And the golden-rod and aster bloom
around thy grave, Rantoul!

With the memory of that morning by
the summer sea I blend
A wild and wondrous story, by the
younger Mather penned,
In that quaint *Magnalia Christi*, with all
strange and marvellous things,
Heaped up huge and undigested, like the
chaos Ovid sings.

Dear to me these far, faint glimpses of
the dual life of old,
Inward, grand with awe and reverence;
outward, mean and coarse and cold;
Gleams of mystic beauty playing over
dull and vulgar clay,
Golden-threaded fancies weaving in a
web of hodden gray.

The great eventful Present hides the Past;
but through the din
Of its loud life hints and echoes from the
life behind steal in;
And the lore of home and fireside, and
the legendary rhyme,
Make the task of duty lighter which the
true man owes his time.

So, with something of the feeling which
the Covenanter knew,
When with pious chisel wandering Scot-
land's moorland graveyards through,
From the graves of old traditions I part
the blackberry-vines,
Wipe the moss from off the headstones,
and retouch the faded lines.

Where the sea-waves back and forward,
hoarse with rolling pebbles, ran,
The garrison-house stood watching on the
gray rocks of Cape Ann;
On its windy site uplifting gabled roof
and palisade,
And rough walls of unhewn timber with
the moonlight overlaid.

On his slow round walked the sentry,
south and eastward looking forth
O'er a rude and broken coast-line, white
with breakers stretching north,—

Wood and rock and gleaming sand-drift,
jagged capes, with bush and tree,
Leaning inland from the smiting of the
wild and gusty sea.

Before the deep-mouthed chimney, dimly
lit by dying brands,
Twenty soldiers sat and waited, with
their muskets in their hands;
On the rough-hewn oaken table the veni-
son haunch was shared,
And the pewter tankard circled slowly
round from beard to beard.

Long they sat and talked together,—
talked of wizards Satan-sold;
Of all ghostly sights and noises,—signs
and wonders manifold;
Of the spectre ship of Salem, with the
dead men in her shrouds,
Sailing sheer above the water, in the loom
of morning clouds;

Of the marvellous valley hidden in the
depths of Gloucester woods,
Full of plants that love the summer,—
blooms of warmer latitudes;
Where the Arctic birch is braided by the
tropic's flowery vines,
And the white magnolia-blossoms star
the twilight of the pines!

But their voices sank yet lower, sank to
husky tones of fear,
As they spake of present tokens of the
powers of evil near;
Of a spectral host, defying stroke of steel
and aim of gun;
Never yet was ball to slay them in the
mould of mortals run!

Thrice, with plumes and flowing scalp-
locks, from the midnight wood they
came,—
Thrice around the block-house marching,
met, unharmed, its volleyed flame;
Then, with mocking laugh and gesture,
sunk in earth or lost in air,
All the ghostly wonder vanished, and the
moonlit sands lay bare.

Midnight came; from out the forest
moved a dusky mass that soon
Grew to warriors, plumed and painted,
grimly marching in the moon.
'Ghosts or witches,' said the captain,
'thus I foil the Evil One!'
And he rammed a silver button, from his
doublet, down his gun.

Once again the spectral horror moved the
guarded wall about;
Once again the levelled muskets through
the palisades flashed out,
With that deadly aim the squirrel on his
tree-top might not shun,
Nor the beach-bird seaward flying with
his slant wing to the sun.

Like the idle rain of summer sped the
harmless shower of lead.
With a laugh of fierce derision, once
again the phantoms fled;
Once again, without a shadow on the
sands the moonlight lay,
And the white smoke curling through it
drifted slowly down the bay!

'God preserve us!' said the captain;
'never mortal foes were there;
They have vanished with their leader,
Prince and Power of the air!
Lay aside your useless weapons; skill
and prowess naught avail;
They who do the Devil's service wear
their master's coat of mail!'

So the night grew near to cock-crow,
when again a warning call
Roused the score of weary soldiers watch-
ing round the dusky hall:
And they looked to flint and priming, and
they longed for break of day;
But the captain closed his Bible: 'Let us
cease from man, and pray!'

To the men who went before us, all the
unseen powers seemed near,
And their steadfast strength of courage
struck its roots in holy fear.
Every hand forsook the musket, every
head was bowed and bare,
Every stout knee pressed the flag-stones,
as the captain led in prayer.

Ceased thereat the mystic marching of
the spectres round the wall,
But a sound abhorred, unearthly, smote
the ears and hearts of all,—
Howls of rage and shrieks of anguish!
Never after mortal man
Saw the ghostly leaguers marching round
the block-house of Cape Ann.

So to us who walk in summer through
the cool and sea-blown town,
From the childhood of its people comes
the solemn legend down.
Not in vain the ancient fiction, in whose
moral lives the youth
And the fitness and the freshness of an
undecaying truth.

Soon or late to all our dwellings come the
spectres of the mind,
Doubts and fears and dread forebodings,
in the darkness undefined;
Round us throng the grim projections of
the heart and of the brain,
And our pride of strength is weakness,
and the cunning hand is vain.

In the dark we cry like children; and no
answer from on high
Breaks the crystal spheres of silence, and
no white wings downward fly;
But the heavenly help we pray for comes
to faith, and not to sight,
And our prayers themselves drive back-
ward all the spirits of the night!

1857.

THE GIFT OF TRITEMIUS.

Tritemius of Herbipolis, one day,
While kneeling at the altar's foot to pray
Alone with God, as was his pious choice,
Heard from without a miserable voice,
A sound which seemed of all sad things
to tell,
As of a lost soul crying out of hell.

Thereat the Abbot paused; the chain
whereby
His thoughts went upward broken by
that cry;
And, looking from the casement, saw
below
A wretched woman, with gray hair
a-flow,
And withered hands held up to him, who
cried
For alms as one who might not be denied.

She cried, 'For the dear love of Him who
gave
His life for ours, my child from bondage
save,—
My beautiful, brave first-born, chained
with slaves
In the Moor's galley, where the sun-smit
waves
Lap the white walls of Tunis!'—'What
I can
I give,' Tritemius said, 'my prayers.'—
'O man
Of God!' she cried, for grief had made
her bold,
'Mock me not thus; I ask not prayers,
but gold.
Words will not serve me, alms alone
suffice;
Even while I speak perchance my first-
born dies.'

'Woman!' Tritemius answered, 'from
our door
None go unfed, hence are we always
poor;
A single soldo is our only store.
Thou hast our prayers;—what can we
give thee more?'

'Give me,' she said, 'the silver candle-
sticks
On either side of the great crucifix.
God well may spare them on His errands
sped,
Or He can give you golden ones instead.'

Then spake Tritemius, 'Even as thy
word,
Woman, so be it! (Our most gracious
Lord,
Who loveth mercy more than sacrifice,
Pardon me if a human soul I prize
Above the gifts upon His altar piled!)
Take what thou askest, and redeem thy
child.'

But his hand trembled as the holy alms
He placed within the beggar's eager palms;
And as she vanished down the linden shade,
He bowed his head and for forgiveness prayed.

So the day passed, and when the twilight came
He woke to find the chapel all aflame,
And, dumb with grateful wonder, to behold
Upon the altar candlesticks of gold!

1857.

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE.

In the valuable and carefully prepared *History of Marblehead*, published in 1879 by Samuel Roads, Jr., it is stated that the crew of Captain Ireson, rather than himself, were responsible for the abandonment of the disabled vessel. To screen themselves they charged their captain with the crime. In view of this the writer of the ballad addressed the following letter to the historian:—

OAK KNOLL, DANVERS, 5 *mo.* 18, 1880.

MY DEAR FRIEND; I heartily thank thee for a copy of thy *History of Marblehead*. I have read it with great interest and think good use has been made of the abundant material. No town in Essex County has a record more honorable than Marblehead; no one has done more to develop the industrial interests of our New England seaboard, and certainly none have given such evidence of self-sacrificing patriotism. I am glad the story of it has been at last told, and told so well. I have now no doubt that thy version of Skipper Ireson's ride is the correct one. My verse was founded solely on a fragment of rhyme which I heard from one of my early schoolmates, a native of Marblehead.

I supposed the story to which it referred dated back at least a century. I knew nothing of the participators, and the narrative of the ballad was pure fancy. I am glad for the sake of truth and justice that the real facts are given in thy book. I certainly would not knowingly do injustice to any one, dead or living.

I am very truly thy friend,
JOHN G. WHITTIER.

OF all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calendar's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
'Here 's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
Over and over the Mænads sang:
'Here 's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship, in Chaleur Bay,—
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
'Lay by! lay by!' they called to him.
Back he answered, 'Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!'
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
'Here 's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near:
'Here 's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

'Hear me, neighbors!' at last he cried,—
'What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!'
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, 'God has touched him! why should we?'
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
'Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!'
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

1857.

THE SYCAMORES.

Hugh Tallant was the first Irish resident of Haverhill, Mass. He planted the buttonwood trees on the bank of the river below the village in the early part of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately this noble avenue is now nearly destroyed.

In the outskirts of the village,
On the river's winding shores,
Stand the Occidental plane-trees,
Stand the ancient sycamores.

One long century hath been numbered,
And another half-way told,
Since the rustic Irish gleeman
Broke for them the virgin mould.

Deftly set to Celtic music,
At his violin's sound they grew,
Through the moonlit eves of summer,
Making Amphion's fable true.

Rise again, thou poor Hugh Tallant!
Pass in jerkin green along,
With thy eyes brimful of laughter,
And thy mouth as full of song.

Pioneer of Erin's outcasts,
With his fiddle and his pack;
Little dreamed the village Saxons
Of the myriads at his back.

How he wrought with spade and fiddle,
Delved by day and sang by night,
With a hand that never wearied,
And a heart forever light,—

Still the gay tradition mingles
With a record grave and drear,
Like the rollic air of Cluny
With the solemn march of Mear.

When the box-tree, white with blossoms,
Made the sweet May woodlands glad,
And the Aronia by the river
Lighted up the swarming shad,

And the bulging nets swept shoreward,
With their silver-sided haul,
Midst the shouts of dripping fishers,
He was merriest of them all.

When, among the jovial huskers,
Love stole in at Labor's side,
With the lusty airs of England
Soft his Celtic measures vied.

Songs of love and wailing lyke-wake,
And the merry fair's carouse;
Of the wild Red Fox of Erin
And the Woman of Three Cows,

By the blazing hearths of winter,
Pleasant seemed his simple tales,
Midst the grimmer Yorkshire legends
And the mountain myths of Wales.

How the souls in Purgatory
Scrambled up from fate forlorn,
On St. Keven's sackcloth ladder,
Slyly hitched to Satan's horn.

Of the fiddler who at Tara
Played all night to ghosts of kings;
Of the brown dwarfs, and the fairies
Dancing in their moorland rings!

Jolliest of our birds of singing,
Best he loved the Bob-o-link.
'Hush!' he'd say, 'the tipsy fairies!
Hear the little folks in drink!'

Merry-faced, with spade and fiddle,
Singing through the ancient town,
Only this, of poor Hugh Tallant,
Hath Tradition handed down.

Not a stone his grave discloses;
But if yet his spirit walks,
'T is beneath the trees he planted,
And when Bob-o-Lincoln talks;

Green memorials of the gleeman!
Linking still the river-shores,
With their shadows cast by sunset,
Stand Hugh Tallant's sycamores!

When the Father of his Country
Through the north-land riding came,
And the roofs were starred with banners,
And the steeples rang acclaim,—

When each war-scarred Continental,
Leaving smithy, mill, and farm,
Waved his rusted sword in welcome,
And shot off his old king's-arm,—

Slowly passed that august Presence
Down the thronged and shouting street;
Village girls as white as angels
Scattering flowers around his feet.

Midway, where the plane-tree's shadow
Deepest fell, his rein he drew:
On his stately head, uncovered,
Cool and soft the west-wind blew.

And he stood up in his stirrups,
Looking up and looking down
On the hills of Gold and Silver
Rimming round the little town,—

On the river, full of sunshine,
To the lap of greenest vales
Winding down from wooded headlands,
Willow-skirted, white with sails.

And he said, the landscape sweeping
Slowly with his ungloved hand,
'I have seen no prospect fairer
In this goodly Eastern land.'

Then the bugles of his escort
Stirred to life the cavalcade:
And that head, so bare and stately,
Vanished down the depths of shade.

Ever since, in town and farm-house,
Life has had its ebb and flow;
Thrice hath passed the human harvest
To its garner green and low.

But the trees the gleeman planted,
Through the changes, changeless stand;
As the marble calm of Tadmor
Mocks the desert's shifting sand.

Still the level moon at rising
Silvers o'er each stately shaft;
Still beneath them, half in shadow,
Singing, glides the pleasure craft;

Still beneath them, arm-enfolded,
Love and Youth together stray;
While, as heart to heart beats faster,
More and more their feet delay.

Where the ancient cobbler, Keezar,
On the open hillside wrought,
Singing, as he drew his stitches,
Songs his German masters taught,

Singing, with his gray hair floating
Round his rosy ample face,—
Now a thousand Saxon craftsmen
Stitch and hammer in his place.

All the pastoral lanes so grassy
Now are Traffic's dusty streets;
From the village, grown a city,
Fast the rural grace retreats.

But, still green, and tall, and stately,
On the river's winding shores,
Stand the Occidental plane-trees,
Stand Hugh Tallant's sycamores.

1857.

THE PIPES AT LUCKNOW.

An incident of the Sepoy mutiny.

Pipes of the misty moorlands,
Voice of the glens and hills;
The droning of the torrents,
The treble of the rills!
Not the braes of broom and heather,
Nor the mountains dark with rain,
Nor maiden bower, nor border tower,
Have heard your sweetest strain!

Dear to the Lowland reaper,
And plaided mountaineer,—
To the cottage and the castle
The Scottish pipes are dear;—
Sweet sounds the ancient pibroch
O'er mountain, loch, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
The pipes at Lucknow played.

Day by day the Indian tiger
Louder yelled, and nearer crept;
Round and round the jungle-serpent
Near and nearer circles swept.
'Pray for rescue, wives and mothers,—
Pray to-day!' the soldier said;
'To-morrow, death's between us
And the wrong and shame we dread.'

Oh, they listened, looked, and waited,
Till their hope became despair;
And the sobs of low bewailing
Filled the pauses of their prayer.
Then up spake a Scottish maiden,
With her ear unto the ground:
'Dinna ye hear it?—dinna ye hear it?
The pipes o' Havelock sound!'

Hushed the wounded man his groaning;
Hushed the wife her little ones;
Alone they heard the drum-roll
And the roar of Sepoy guns.
But to sounds of home and childhood
The Highland ear was true;—
As her mother's cradle-crooning
The mountain pipes she knew.

Like the march of soundless music
Through the vision of the seer,
More of feeling than of hearing,
Of the heart than of the ear,
She knew the droning pibroch,
She knew the Campbell's call:
'Hark! hear ye no' MacGregor's,
The grandest o' them all!'

Oh, they listened, dumb and breathless,
And they caught the sound at last;
Faint and far beyond the Goomtee
Rose and fell the piper's blast!

Then a burst of wild thanksgiving
Mingled woman's voice and man's;
'God be praised!—the march of Havelock!
The piping of the clans!'

Louder, nearer, fierce as vengeance,
Sharp and shrill as swords at strife,
Came the wild MacGregor's clan-call,
Stinging all the air to life.
But when the far-off dust-cloud
To plaided legions grew,
Full tenderly and blithesomely
The pipes of rescue blew!

Round the silver domes of Lucknow,
Moslem mosque and Pagan shrine,
Breathed the air to Britons dearest,
The air of Auld Lang Syne.
O'er the cruel roll of war-drums
Rose that sweet and homelike strain;
And the tartan clove the turban,
As the Goomtee cleaves the plain.

Dear to the corn-land reaper
And plaided mountaineer,—
To the cottage and the castle
The piper's song is dear.
Sweet sounds the Gaelic pibroch
O'er mountain, glen, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
The Pipes at Lucknow played!

1858.

TELLING THE BEES.

A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home. [The scene is minutely that of the Whittier homestead.]

HERE is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,
Pasy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
Heavy and slow;
And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There 's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze;
And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my Sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed,—
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now,—the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,—
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, 'My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day:
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away.'

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:—
'Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!'

1858.

THE SWAN SONG OF PARSON AVERY.

In Young's *Chronicles of Massachusetts Bay from* 1623 *to* 1636 may be found Anthony Thacher's *Narrative of his Shipwreck.* Thacher was Avery's companion and survived to tell the tale. Mather's *Magnalia*, III. 2, gives further *Particulars of Parson Avery's End*, and suggests the title of the poem.

When the reaper's task was ended, and the summer wearing late,
Parson Avery sailed from Newbury, with his wife and children eight,
Dropping down the river-harbor in the shallop 'Watch and Wait.'

Pleasantly lay the clearings in the mellow summer-morn,
With the newly planted orchards dropping their fruits first-born,
And the home-roofs like brown islands amid a sea of corn.

Broad meadows reached out seaward the tided creeks between,
And hills rolled wave-like inland, with oaks and walnuts green;—
A fairer home, a goodlier land, his eyes had never seen.

Yet away sailed Parson Avery, away where duty led,
And the voice of God seemed calling, to break the living bread
To the souls of fishers starving on the rocks of Marblehead.

All day they sailed: at nightfall the pleasant land-breeze died,
The blackening sky, at midnight, its starry lights denied,
And far and low the thunder of tempest prophesied!

Blotted out were all the coast-lines, gone were rock, and wood, and sand;
Grimly anxious stood the skipper with the rudder in his hand,
And questioned of the darkness what was sea and what was land.

And the preacher heard his dear ones, nestled round him, weeping sore:
'Never heed, my little children! Christ is walking on before
To the pleasant land of heaven, where the sea shall be no more.'

All at once the great cloud parted, like a curtain drawn aside,
To let down the torch of lightning on the terror far and wide;
And the thunder and the whirlwind together smote the tide.

There was wailing in the shallop, woman's wail and man's despair,
A crash of breaking timbers on the rocks so sharp and bare,
And, through it all, the murmur of Father Avery's prayer.

From his struggle in the darkness with the wild waves and the blast,
On a rock, where every billow broke above him as it passed,
Alone, of all his household, the man of God was cast.

There a comrade heard him praying, in the pause of wave and wind:
'All my own have gone before me, and I linger just behind;
Not for life I ask, but only for the rest Thy ransomed find!

'In this night of death I challenge the promise of Thy word!—
Let me see the great salvation of which mine ears have heard!—
Let me pass from hence forgiven, through the grace of Christ, our Lord!

'In the baptism of these waters wash white my every sin,
And let me follow up to Thee my household and my kin!
Open the sea-gate of Thy heaven, and let me enter in!'

When the Christian sings his death-song, all the listening heavens draw near,
And the angels, leaning over the walls of crystal, hear
How the notes so faint and broken swell to music in God's ear.

The ear of God was open to His servant's last request;
As the strong wave swept him downward the sweet hymn upward pressed,
And the soul of Father Avery went, singing, to its rest.

There was wailing on the mainland, from the rocks of Marblehead;
In the stricken church of Newbury the notes of prayer were read;
And long, by board and hearthstone, the living mourned the dead.

And still the fishers outbound, or scudding from the squall,
With grave and reverent faces, the ancient tale recall,
When they see the white waves breaking on the Rock of Avery's Fall!

1858.

THE DOUBLE-HEADED SNAKE OF NEWBURY.

'Concerning ye Amphisbæna, as soon as I received your commands, I made diligent inquiry: . . . he assures me yt it had really two heads, one at each end; two mouths, two stings or tongues.'—Rev. Christopher Toppan *to* Cotton Mather.

Far away in the twilight time
Of every people, in every clime,
Dragons and griffins and monsters dire,
Born of water, and air, and fire,
Or nursed, like the Python, in the mud
And ooze of the old Deucalion flood,
Crawl and wriggle and foam with rage,
Through dusk tradition and ballad age.
So from the childhood of Newbury town
And its time of fable the tale comes down
Of a terror which haunted bush and brake,
The Amphisbæna, the Double Snake!

Thou who makest the tale thy mirth,
Consider that strip of Christian earth
On the desolate shore of a sailless sea,
Full of terror and mystery,
Half redeemed from the evil hold
Of the wood so dreary, and dark, and old,
Which drank with its lips of leaves the dew
When Time was young, and the world was new,
And wove its shadows with sun and moon,
Ere the stones of Cheops were squared and hewn.
Think of the sea's dread monotone,
Of the mournful wail from the pine-wood blown,
Of the strange, vast splendors that lit the North,
Of the troubled throes of the quaking earth,
And the dismal tales the Indian told,
Till the settler's heart at his hearth grew cold,
And he shrank from the tawny wizard boasts,
And the hovering shadows seemed full of ghosts,

And above, below, and on every side,
The fear of his creed seemed verified;—
And think, if his lot were now thine own,
To grope with terrors nor named nor known,
How laxer muscle and weaker nerve
And a feebler faith thy need might serve;
And own to thyself the wonder more
That the snake had two heads, and not a score!

Whether he lurked in the Oldtown fen
Or the gray earth-flax of the Devil's Den,
Or swam in the wooded Artichoke,
Or coiled by the Northman's Written Rock,
Nothing on record is left to show;
Only the fact that he lived, we know,
And left the cast of a double head
In the scaly mask which he yearly shed.
For he carried a head where his tail should be,
And the two, of course, could never agree,
But wriggled about with main and might,
Now to the left and now to the right;
Pulling and twisting this way and that,
Neither knew what the other was at.

A snake with two heads, lurking so near!
Judge of the wonder, guess at the fear!
Think what ancient gossips might say,
Shaking their heads in their dreary way,
Between the meetings on Sabbath-day!
How urchins, searching at day's decline
The Common Pasture for sheep or kine,
The terrible double-ganger heard
In leafy rustle or whir of bird!
Think what a zest it gave to the sport,
In berry-time, of the younger sort,
As over pastures, blackberry-twined,
Reuben and Dorothy lagged behind,
And closer and closer, for fear of harm,
The maiden clung to her lover's arm;
And how the spark, who was forced to stay,
By his sweetheart's fears, till the break of day,
Thanked the snake for the fond delay!

Far and wide the tale was told,
Like a snowball growing while it rolled.
The nurse hushed with it the baby's cry;
And it served, in the worthy minister's eye,
To paint the primitive serpent by.
Cotton Mather came galloping down
All the way to Newbury town,
With his eyes agog and his ears set wide,
And his marvellous inkhorn at his side;
Stirring the while in the shallow pool
Of his brains for the lore he learned at school,
To garnish the story, with here a streak
Of Latin, and there another of Greek:
And the tales he heard and the notes he took,
Behold! are they not in his Wonder-Book?

Stories, like dragons, are hard to kill.
If the snake does not, the tale runs still
In Byfield Meadows, on Pipestave Hill.
And still, whenever husband and wife
Publish the shame of their daily strife,
And, with mad cross-purpose, tug and strain
At either end of the marriage-chain,
The gossips say, with a knowing shake
Of their gray heads, 'Look at the Double Snake!
One in body and two in will,
The Amphisbæna is living still!'

1859.

MABEL MARTIN.

A HARVEST IDYL.

Susanna Martin, an aged woman of Amesbury, Mass., was tried and executed for the alleged crime of witchcraft. Her home was in what is now known as Pleasant Valley on the Merrimac, a little above the old Ferry way, where, tradition says, an attempt was made to assassinate Sir Edmund Andros on his way to Falmouth (afterwards Portland) and Pemaquid, which was frustrated by a warning timely given. Goody Martin was the only woman hanged on the north side of the Merrimac during the dreadful delusion. The aged wife of Judge Bradbury, who lived on the other side of the Powow River, was imprisoned, and would have been put to death but for the collapse of the hideous persecution.

The substance of the poem which follows was published under the name of *The Witch's Daughter* in *The National Era* in 1857. In 1875 my publishers desired to issue it with illustrations, and I then enlarged it and otherwise altered it to its present form. The principal addition was in the verses which constitute Part I.

PROEM.

I CALL the old time back: I bring my lay
In tender memory of the summer day
When, where our native river lapsed away,

We dreamed it over, while the thrushes made
Songs of their own, and the great pine-trees laid
On warm noonlights the masses of their shade.

And *she* was with us, living o'er again
Her life in ours, despite of years and pain,—
The Autumn's brightness after latter rain.

Beautiful in her holy peace as one
Who stands, at evening, when the work is done,
Glorified in the setting of the sun!

Her memory makes our common landscape seem
Fairer than any of which painters dream;
Lights the brown hills and sings in every stream;

For she whose speech was always truth's pure gold
Heard, not unpleased, its simple legends told,
And loved with us the beautiful and old.

I. THE RIVER VALLEY.

Across the level tableland,
A grassy, rarely trodden way,
With thinnest skirt of birchen spray

And stunted growth of cedar, leads
To where you see the dull plain fall
Sheer off, steep-slanted, ploughed by all
The seasons' rainfalls. On its brink
The over-leaning harebells swing,
With roots half bare the pine-trees cling;

And, through the shadow looking west,
You see the wavering river flow
Along a vale, that far below

Holds to the sun, the sheltering hills
And glimmering water-line between,
Broad fields of corn and meadows green,

And fruit-bent orchards grouped around
The low brown roofs and painted eaves,
And chimney-tops half hid in leaves.

No warmer valley hides behind
Yon wind-scourged sand-dunes, cold and bleak;
No fairer river comes to seek

The wave-sung welcome of the sea,
Or mark the northmost border line
Of sun-loved growths of nut and vine.

Here, ground-fast in their native fields,
Untempted by the city's gain,
The quiet farmer folk remain

Who bear the pleasant name of Friends,
And keep their fathers' gentle ways
And simple speech of Bible days;

In whose neat homesteads woman holds
With modest ease her equal place,
And wears upon her tranquil face

The look of one who, merging not
Her self-hood in another's will,
Is love's and duty's handmaid still.

Pass with me down the path that winds
Through birches to the open land,
Where, close upon the river strand

You mark a cellar, vine o'errun,
Above whose wall of loosened stones
The sumach lifts its reddening cones,

And the black nightshade's berries shine,
And broad, unsightly burdocks fold
The household ruin, century-old.

Here, in the dim colonial time
Of sterner lives and gloomier faith,
A woman lived, tradition saith,

Who wrought her neighbors foul annoy,
And witched and plagued the country-side,
Till at the hangman's hand she died.

Sit with me while the westering day
Falls slantwise down the quiet vale,
And, haply ere yon loitering sail,

That rounds the upper headland, falls
Below Deer Island's pines, or sees
Behind it Hawkswood's belt of trees

Rise black against the sinking sun,
My idyl of its days of old,
The valley's legend, shall be told.

II. THE HUSKING.

It was the pleasant harvest-time,
When cellar-bins are closely stowed,
And garrets bend beneath their load,

And the old swallow-haunted barns,—
Brown-gabled, long, and full of seams
Through which the moted sunlight streams,

And winds blow freshly in, to shake
The red plumes of the roosted cocks,
And the loose hay-mow's scented locks,—

Are filled with summer's ripened stores,
Its odorous grass and barley sheaves,
From their low scaffolds to their eaves.

On Esek Harden's oaken floor,
With many an autumn threshing worn,
Lay the heaped ears of unhusked corn.

And thither came young men and maids,
Beneath a moon that, large and low,
Lit that sweet eve of long ago.

They took their places; some by chance,
And others by a merry voice
Or sweet smile guided to their choice.

How pleasantly the rising moon,
Between the shadow of the mows,
Looked on them through the great elm-boughs!

On sturdy boyhood, sun-embrowned,
On girlhood with its solid curves
Of healthful strength and painless nerves!

And jests went round, and laughs that made
The house-dog answer with his howl,
And kept astir the barn-yard fowl;

And quaint old songs their fathers sung
In Derby dales and Yorkshire moors,
Ere Norman William trod their shores;

And tales, whose merry license shook
The fat sides of the Saxon thane,
Forgetful of the hovering Dane,—

Rude plays to Celt and Cimbri known,
The charms and riddles that beguiled
On Oxus' banks the young world's child,—

That primal picture-speech wherein
Have youth and maid the story told,
So new in each, so dateless old,

Recalling pastoral Ruth in her
Who waited, blushing and demure,
The red-ear's kiss of forfeiture.

III. THE WITCH'S DAUGHTER.

But still the sweetest voice was mute
That river-valley ever heard
From lips of maid or throat of bird;

For Mabel Martin sat apart,
And let the hay-mow's shadow fall
Upon the loveliest face of all.

She sat apart, as one forbid,
Who knew that none would condescend
To own the Witch-wife's child a friend.

The seasons scarce had gone their round,
Since curious thousands thronged to see
Her mother at the gallows-tree;

And mocked the prison-palsied limbs
That faltered on the fatal stairs,
And wan lip trembling with its prayers!

Few questioned of the sorrowing child,
Or, when they saw the mother die,
Dreamed of the daughter's agony.

They went up to their homes that day,
As men and Christians justified:
God willed it, and the wretch had died!

Dear God and Father of us all,
Forgive our faith in cruel lies,—
Forgive the blindness that denies!

Forgive Thy creature when he takes,
For the all-perfect love Thou art,
Some grim creation of his heart.

Cast down our idols, overturn
Our bloody altars; let us see
Thyself in Thy humanity!

Young Mabel from her mother's grave
Crept to her desolate hearth-stone,
And wrestled with her fate alone;

With love, and anger, and despair,
The phantoms of disordered sense,
The awful doubts of Providence!

Oh, dreary broke the winter days,
And dreary fell the winter nights
When, one by one, the neighboring lights

Went out, and human sounds grew still,
And all the phantom-peopled dark
Closed round her hearth-fire's dying spark.

And summer days were sad and long,
And sad the uncompanioned eves,
And sadder sunset-tinted leaves,

And Indian Summer's airs of balm;
She scarcely felt the soft caress,
The beauty died of loneliness!

The school-boys jeered her as they passed,
And, when she sought the house of prayer,
Her mother's curse pursued her there.

And still o'er many a neighboring door
She saw the horseshoe's curvèd charm,
To guard against her mother's harm:

That mother, poor and sick and lame,
Who daily, by the old arm-chair,
Folded her withered hands in prayer;—

Who turned, in Salem's dreary jail,
Her worn old Bible o'er and o'er,
When her dim eyes could read no more!

Sore tried and pained, the poor girl kept
Her faith, and trusted that her way,
So dark, would somewhere meet the day.

And still her weary wheel went round
Day after day, with no relief:
Small leisure have the poor for grief.

IV. THE CHAMPION.

So in the shadow Mabel sits;
Untouched by mirth she sees and hears,
Her smile is sadder than her tears.

But cruel eyes have found her out,
And cruel lips repeat her name,
And taunt her with her mother's shame.

She answered not with railing words,
But drew her apron o'er her face,
And, sobbing, glided from the place.

And only pausing at the door,
Her sad eyes met the troubled gaze
Of one who, in her better days,

Had been her warm and steady friend,
Ere yet her mother's doom had made
Even Esek Harden half afraid.

He felt that mute appeal of tears,
And, starting, with an angry frown,
Hushed all the wicked murmurs down.

'Good neighbors mine,' he sternly said,
'This passes harmless mirth or jest;
I brook no insult to my guest.

'She is indeed her mother's child;
But God's sweet pity ministers
Unto no whiter soul than hers.

'Let Goody Martin rest in peace;
I never knew her harm a fly,
And witch or not, God knows—not I.

'I know who swore her life away;
And as God lives, I'd not condemn
An Indian dog on word of them.'

The broadest lands in all the town,
The skill to guide, the power to awe,
Were Harden's; and his word was law.

None dared withstand him to his face,
But one sly maiden spake aside:
'The little witch is evil-eyed!

'Her mother only killed a cow,
Or witched a churn or dairy-pan;
But she, forsooth, must charm a man!'

V. IN THE SHADOW.

Poor Mabel, homeward turning, passed
The nameless terrors of the wood,
And saw, as if a ghost pursued,

Her shadow gliding in the moon;
The soft breath of the west-wind gave
A chill as from her mother's grave.

How dreary seemed the silent house!
Wide in the moonbeams' ghastly glare
Its windows had a dead man's stare!

And, like a gaunt and spectral hand,
The tremulous shadow of a birch
Reached out and touched the door's low porch,

As if to lift its latch; hard by,
A sudden warning call she heard,
The night-cry of a boding bird.

She leaned against the door; her face,
So fair, so young, so full of pain,
White in the moonlight's silver rain.

The river, on its pebbled rim,
Made music such as childhood knew;
The door-yard tree was whispered through
By voices such as childhood's ear
Had heard in moonlights long ago;
And through the willow-boughs below

She saw the rippled waters shine;
Beyond, in waves of shade and light,
The hills rolled off into the night.

She saw and heard, but over all
A sense of some transforming spell,
The shadow of her sick heart fell.

And still across the wooded space
The harvest lights of Harden shone,
And song and jest and laugh went on.

And he, so gentle, true, and strong,
Of men the bravest and the best,
Had he, too, scorned her with the rest?

She strove to drown her sense of wrong,
And, in her old and simple way,
To teach her bitter heart to pray.

Poor child! the prayer, begun in faith,
Grew to a low, despairing cry
Of utter misery: 'Let me die!

'Oh! take me from the scornful eyes,
And hide me where the cruel speech
And mocking finger may not reach!

'I dare not breathe my mother's name:
A daughter's right I dare not crave
To weep above her unblest grave!

'Let me not live until my heart,
With few to pity, and with none
To love me, hardens into stone.

'O God! have mercy on Thy child,
Whose faith in Thee grows weak and small,
And take me ere I lose it all!'

A shadow on the moonlight fell,
And murmuring wind and wave became
A voice whose burden was her name.

VI. THE BETROTHAL.

Had then God heard her? Had He sent
His angel down? In flesh and blood,
Before her Esek Harden stood!

He laid his hand upon her arm:
'Dear Mabel, this no more shall be;
Who scoffs at you must scoff at me.

'You know rough Esek Harden well;
And if he seems no suitor gay,
And if his hair is touched with gray,

'The maiden grown shall never find
His heart less warm than when she smiled,
Upon his knees a little child!'

Her tears of grief were tears of joy,
As, folded in his strong embrace,
She looked in Esek Harden's face.

'O truest friend of all!' she said,
'God bless you for your kindly thought,
And make me worthy of my lot!'

He led her forth, and, blent in one,
Beside their happy pathway ran
The shadows of the maid and man.

He led her through his dewy fields,
To where the swinging lanterns glowed,
And through the doors the huskers showed.

'Good friends and neighbors!' Esek said,
'I'm weary of this lonely life;
In Mabel see my chosen wife!

'She greets you kindly, one and all;
The past is past, and all offence
Falls harmless from her innocence.

'Henceforth she stands no more alone;
You know what Esek Harden is;—
He brooks no wrong to him or his.

'Now let the merriest tales be told,
And let the sweetest songs be sung
That ever made the old heart young!

'For now the lost has found a home;
And a lone hearth shall brighter burn,
As all the household joys return!'

Oh, pleasantly the harvest-moon,
Between the shadow of the mows,
Looked on them through the great elm-boughs!

On Mabel's curls of golden hair,
On Esek's shaggy strength it fell;
And the wind whispered, 'It is well!'

1857.

THE PROPHECY OF SAMUEL SEWALL.

The prose version of this prophecy is to be found in Sewall's *The New Heaven upon the New Earth*, 1697, quoted in Joshua Coffin's *History of Newbury*. Judge Sewall's father, Henry Sewall, was one of the pioneers of Newbury.

Up and down the village streets
Strange are the forms my fancy meets,
For the thoughts and things of to-day are hid,
And through the veil of a closëd lid
The ancient worthies I see again:
I hear the tap of the elder's cane,
And his awful periwig I see,
And the silver buckles of shoe and knee.
Stately and slow, with thoughtful air,
His black cap hiding his whitened hair,
Walks the Judge of the great Assize,
Samuel Sewall the good and wise.
His face with lines of firmness wrought,
He wears the look of a man unbought,
Who swears to his hurt and changes not;
Yet, touched and softened nevertheless
With the grace of Christian gentleness,
The face that a child would climb to kiss!
True and tender and brave and just,
That man might honor and woman trust.

Touching and sad, a tale is told,
Like a penitent hymn of the Psalmist old,
Of the fast which the good man lifelong kept[13]
With a haunting sorrow that never slept,
As the circling year brought round the time
Of an error that left the sting of crime,
When he sat on the bench of the witch-craft courts,
With the laws of Moses and Hale's Reports,
And spake, in the name of both, the word
That gave the witch's neck to the cord,

And piled the oaken planks that pressed
The feeble life from the warlock's breast!
All the day long, from dawn to dawn,
His door was bolted, his curtain drawn;
No foot on his silent threshold trod,
No eye looked on him save that of God,
As he baffled the ghosts of the dead with charms
Of penitent tears, and prayers, and psalms,
And, with precious proofs from the sacred word
Of the boundless pity and love of the Lord,
His faith confirmed and his trust renewed
That the sin of his ignorance, sorely rued,
Might be washed away in the mingled flood
Of his human sorrow and Christ's dear blood!

Green forever the memory be
Of the Judge of the old Theocracy,
Whom even his errors glorified,
Like a far-seen, sunlit mountain-side
By the cloudy shadows which o'er it glide!
Honor and praise to the Puritan
Who the halting step of his age outran,
And, seeing the infinite worth of man
In the priceless gift the Father gave,
In the infinite love that stooped to save,
Dared not brand his brother a slave!
'Who doth such wrong,' he was wont to say,
In his own quaint, picture-loving way,
'Flings up to Heaven a hand-grenade
Which God shall cast down upon his head!'

Widely as heaven and hell, contrast
That brave old jurist of the past
And the cunning trickster and knave of courts
Who the holy features of Truth distorts,—
Ruling as right the will of the strong,
Poverty, crime, and weakness wrong;
Wide-eared to power, to the wronged and weak
Deaf as Egypt's gods of leek;
Scoffing aside at party's nod
Order of nature and law of God;
For whose dabbled ermine respect were waste,
Reverence folly, and awe misplaced;
Justice of whom 't were vain to seek
As from Koordish robber or Syrian Sheik!
Oh, leave the wretch to his bribes and sins;
Let him rot in the web of lies he spins!
To the saintly soul of the early day,
To the Christian judge, let us turn and say:
'Praise and thanks for an honest man!—
Glory to God for the Puritan!'

I see, far southward, this quiet day,
The hills of Newbury rolling away,
With the many tints of the season gay,
Dreamily blending in autumn mist
Crimson, and gold, and amethyst.
Long and low, with dwarf trees crowned,
Plum Island lies, like a whale aground,
A stone's toss over the narrow sound.
Inland, as far as the eye can go,
The hills curve round like a bended bow:
A silver arrow from out them sprung,
I see the shine of the Quasycung;
And, round and round, over valley and hill,
Old roads winding, as old roads will,
Here to a ferry, and there to a mill;
And glimpses of chimneys and gabled eaves,
Through green elm arches and maple leaves,—
Old homesteads sacred to all that can
Gladden or sadden the heart of man,
Over whose thresholds of oak and stone
Life and Death have come and gone!
There pictured tiles in the fireplace show,
Great beams sag from the ceiling low,
The dresser glitters with polished wares,
The long clock ticks on the foot-worn stairs,
And the low, broad chimney shows the crack
By the earthquake made a century back.
Up from their midst springs the village spire
With the crest of its cock in the sun afire;

Beyond are orchards and planting lands,
And great salt marshes and glimmering sands,
And, where north and south the coast-lines run,
The blink of the sea in breeze and sun!

I see it all like a chart unrolled,
But my thoughts are full of the past and old,
I hear the tales of my boyhood told;
And the shadows and shapes of early days
Flit dimly by in the veiling haze,
With measured movement and rhythmic chime
Weaving like shuttles my web of rhyme.
I think of the old man wise and good,
Who once on yon misty hillsides stood,
(A poet who never measured rhyme,
A seer unknown to his dull-eared time,)
And, propped on his staff of age, looked down,
With his boyhood's love, on his native town,
Where, written as if on its hills and plains,
His burden of prophecy yet remains,[14]
For the voices of wood, and wave, and wind
To read in the ear of the musing mind:—

'As long as Plum Island, to guard the coast
As God appointed, shall keep its post;
As long as a salmon shall haunt the deep
Of Merrimac River, or sturgeon leap;
As long as pickerel swift and slim,
Or red-backed perch, in Crane Pond swim;
As long as the annual sea-fowl know
Their time to come and their time to go;
As long as cattle shall roam at will
The green, grass meadows by Turkey Hill;
As long as sheep shall look from the side
Of Oldtown Hill on marishes wide,
And Parker River, and salt-sea tide;
As long as a wandering pigeon shall search
The fields below from his white-oak perch,
When the barley-harvest is ripe and shorn,
And the dry husks fall from the standing corn;
As long as Nature shall not grow old,
Nor drop her work from her doting hold,
And her care for the Indian corn forget,
And the yellow rows in pairs to set;—
So long shall Christians here be born,
Grow up and ripen as God's sweet corn!—
By the beak of bird, by the breath of frost,
Shall never a holy ear be lost,
But, husked by Death in the Planter's sight,
Be sown again in the fields of light!'

The Island still is purple with plums,
Up the river the salmon comes,
The sturgeon leaps, and the wild-fowl feeds
On hillside berries and marish seeds,—
All the beautiful signs remain,
From spring-time sowing to autumn rain
The good man's vision returns again!
And let us hope, as well we can,
That the Silent Angel who garners man
May find some grain as of old he found
In the human cornfield ripe and sound,
And the Lord of the Harvest deign to own
The precious seed by the fathers sown!

1859.

THE RED RIVER VOYAGEUR.

[Suggested by reading the following passage in *Minnesota and its Resources*, by J. Wesley Bond: 'As I pass slowly along the lonely road that leads me from thee, Selkirk, mine eyes do turn continually to gaze upon thy smiling, golden fields, and thy lofty towers, now burnished with the rays of the departing sun, while the sweet vesper bell reverberates afar and strikes so mournfully pleasant upon mine ear. I feel satisfied that, though absent thousands of weary miles, my thoughts will always dwell on thee with rapturous emotions.' At midnight, with the last stroke of the clock ushering in the 17th of December, 1891, the 84th aanniversary of Whittier's birth, the bells of St. Boniface rang a joyous peal.][15]

Out and in the river is winding
The links of its long, red chain,
Through belts of dusky pine-land
And gusty leagues of plain.

Only, at times, a smoke-wreath
With the drifting cloud-rack joins,—
The smoke of the hunting-lodges
Of the wild Assiniboins!

Drearily blows the north-wind
From the land of ice and snow;
The eyes that look are weary,
And heavy the hands that row.

And with one foot on the water,
And one upon the shore,
The Angel of Shadow gives warning
That day shall be no more.

Is it the clang of wild-geese?
Is it the Indian's yell,
That lends to the voice of the north-wind
The tones of a far-off bell?

The voyageur smiles as he listens
To the sound that grows apace;
Well he knows the vesper ringing
Of the bells of St. Boniface.

The bells of the Roman Mission,
That call from their turrets twain,
To the boatman on the river,
To the hunter on the plain!

Even so in our mortal journey,
The bitter north-winds blow,
And thus upon life's Red River
Our hearts, as oarsmen, row.

And when the Angel of Shadow
Rests his feet on wave and shore,
And our eyes grow dim with watching
And our hearts faint at the oar,

Happy is he who heareth
The signal of his release
In the bells of the Holy City,
The chimes of eternal peace!

1859.

THE PREACHER.

George Whitefield, the celebrated preacher, died at Newburyport in 1770, and was buried under the church which has since borne his name.

Its windows flashing to the sky,
Beneath a thousand roofs of brown,
Far down the vale, my friend and I
Beheld the old and quiet town;
The ghostly sails that out at sea
Flapped their white wings of mystery;
The beaches glimmering in the sun,
And the low wooded capes that run
Into the sea-mist north and south;
The sand-bluffs at the river's mouth;
The swinging chain-bridge, and, afar,
The foam-line of the harbor-bar.

Over the woods and meadow-lands
A crimson-tinted shadow lay,
Of clouds through which the setting day
Flung a slant glory far away.
It glittered on the wet sea-sands,
It flamed upon the city's panes,
Smote the white sails of ships that wore
Outward or in, and glided o'er
The steeples with their veering vanes!

Awhile my friend with rapid search
O'erran the landscape. 'Yonder spire
Over gray roofs, a shaft of fire;
What is it, pray?'—'The Whitefield
Church!
Walled about by its basement stones,
There rest the marvellous prophet's
bones.'
Then as our homeward way we walked,
Of the great preacher's life we talked;
And through the mystery of our theme
The outward glory seemed to stream,
And Nature's self interpreted
The doubtful record of the dead;
And every level beam that smote
The sails upon the dark afloat
A symbol of the light became,
Which touched the shadows of our blame
With tongues of Pentecostal flame.

Over the roofs of the pioneers
Gathers the moss of a hundred years;

On man and his works has passed the change
Which needs must be in a century's range.
The land lies open and warm in the sun,
Anvils clamor and mill-wheels run,—
Flocks on the hillsides, herds on the plain,
The wilderness gladdened with fruit and grain!
But the living faith of the settlers old
A dead profession their children hold;
To the lust of office and greed of trade
A stepping-stone is the altar made.
The Church, to place and power the door,
Rebukes the sin of the world no more,
Nor sees its Lord in the homeless poor.
Everywhere is the grasping hand,
And eager adding of land to land;
And earth, which seemed to the fathers meant
But as a pilgrim's wayside tent,—
A nightly shelter to fold away
When the Lord should call at the break of day,—
Solid and steadfast seems to be,
And Time has forgotten Eternity!

But fresh and green from the rotting roots
Of primal forests the young growth shoots;
From the death of the old the new proceeds,
And the life of truth from the rot of creeds:
On the ladder of God, which upward leads,
The steps of progress are human needs.
For His judgments still are a mighty deep,
And the eyes of His providence never sleep:
When the night is darkest He gives the morn;
When the famine is sorest, the wine and corn!

In the church of the wilderness Edwards wrought,
Shaping his creed at the forge of thought;
And with Thor's own hammer welded and bent
The iron links of his argument,
Which strove to grasp in its mighty span
The purpose of God and the fate of man!
Yet faithful still, in his daily round
To the weak, and the poor, and sin-sick found,
The schoolman's lore and the casuist's art
Drew warmth and life from his fervent heart.
Had he not seen in the solitudes
Of his deep and dark Northampton woods
A vision of love about him fall?
Not the blinding splendor which fell on Saul,
But the tenderer glory that rests on them
Who walk in the New Jerusalem,
Where never the sun nor moon are known,
But the Lord and His love are the light alone!
And watching the sweet, still countenance
Of the wife of his bosom rapt in trance,
Had he not treasured each broken word
Of the mystical wonder seen and heard;
And loved the beautiful dreamer more
That thus to the desert of earth she bore
Clusters of Eshcol from Canaan's shore?

As the barley-winnower, holding with pain
Aloft in waiting his chaff and grain,
Joyfully welcomes the far-off breeze
Sounding the pine-tree's slender keys,
So he who had waited long to hear
The sound of the Spirit drawing near,
Like that which the son of Iddo heard
When the feet of angels the myrtles stirred,
Felt the answer of prayer, at last,
As over his church the afflatus passed,
Breaking its sleep as breezes break
To sun-bright ripples a stagnant lake.

At first a tremor of silent fear,
The creep of the flesh at danger near,
A vague foreboding and discontent,
Over the hearts of the people went.
All nature warned in sounds and signs:
The wind in the tops of the forest pines

In the name of the Highest called to prayer,
As the muezzin calls from the minaret stair.
Through ceilëd chambers of secret sin
Sudden and strong the light shone in;
A guilty sense of his neighbor's needs
Startled the man of title-deeds;
The trembling hand of the worldling shook
The dust of years from the Holy Book;
And the psalms of David, forgotten long,
Took the place of the scoffer's song.

The impulse spread like the outward course
Of waters moved by a central force;
The tide of spiritual life rolled down
From inland mountains to seaboard town.

Prepared and ready the altar stands
Waiting the prophet's outstretched hands
And prayer availing, to downward call
The fiery answer in view of all.
Hearts are like wax in the furnace; who
Shall mould, and shape, and cast them anew?
Lo! by the Merrimac Whitefield stands
In the temple that never was made by hands,—
Curtains of azure, and crystal wall,
And dome of the sunshine over all—
A homeless pilgrim, with dubious name
Blown about on the winds of fame;
Now as an angel of blessing classed,
And now as a mad enthusiast.
Called in his youth to sound and gauge
The moral lapse of his race and age,
And, sharp as truth, the contrast draw
Of human frailty and perfect law;
Possessed by the one dread thought that lent
Its goad to his fiery temperament,
Up and down the world he went,
A John the Baptist crying, Repent!

No perfect whole can our nature make;
Here or there the circle will break;
The orb of life as it takes the light
On one side leaves the other in night.

Never was saint so good and great
As to give no chance at St. Peter's gate
For the plea of the Devil's advocate.
So, incomplete by his being's law,
The marvellous preacher had his flaw;
With step unequal, and lame with faults,
His shade on the path of History halts.

Wisely and well said the Eastern bard:
Fear is easy, but love is hard,—
Easy to glow with the Santon's rage,
And walk on the Meccan pilgrimage;
But he is greatest and best who can
Worship Allah by loving man.

Thus he,—to whom, in the painful stress
Of zeal on fire from its own excess,
Heaven seemed so vast and earth so small
That man was nothing, since God was all,—
Forgot, as the best at times have done,
That the love of the Lord and of man are one.

Little to him whose feet unshod
The thorny path of the desert trod,
Careless of pain, so it led to God,
Seemed the hunger-pang and the poor man's wrong,
The weak ones trodden beneath the strong.
Should the worm be chooser?—the clay withstand
The shaping will of the potter's hand?

In the Indian fable Arjoon hears
The scorn of a god rebuke his fears:
'Spare thy pity!' Krishna saith;
'Not in thy sword is the power of death!
All is illusion,—loss but seems;
Pleasure and pain are only dreams;
Who deems he slayeth doth not kill;
Who counts as slain is living still.
Strike, nor fear thy blow is crime;
Nothing dies but the cheats of time;
Slain or slayer, small the odds
To each, immortal as Indra's gods!'

So by Savannah's banks of shade,
The stones of his mission the preacher laid

On the heart of the negro crushed and rent,
And made of his blood the wall's cement;
Bade the slave-ship speed from coast to coast,
Fanned by the wings of the Holy Ghost;
And begged, for the love of Christ, the gold
Coined from the hearts in its groaning hold.
What could it matter, more or less
Of stripes, and hunger, and weariness?
Living or dying, bond or free,
What was time to eternity?

Alas for the preacher's cherished schemes!
Mission and church are now but dreams;
Nor prayer nor fasting availed the plan
To honor God through the wrong of man.
Of all his labors no trace remains
Save the bondman lifting his hands in chains.
The woof he wove in the righteous warp
Of freedom-loving Oglethorpe,
Clothes with curses the goodly land,
Changes its greenness and bloom to sand;
And a century's lapse reveals once more
The slave-ship stealing to Georgia's shore.
Father of Light! how blind is he
Who sprinkles the altar he rears to Thee
With the blood and tears of humanity!

He erred: shall we count His gifts as naught?
Was the work of God in him unwrought?
The servant may through his deafness err,
And blind may be God's messenger;
But the errand is sure they go upon,—
The word is spoken, the deed is done.
Was the Hebrew temple less fair and good
That Solomon bowed to gods of wood?
For his tempted heart and wandering feet,
Were the songs of David less pure and sweet?
So in light and shadow the preacher went,
God's erring and human instrument;
And the hearts of the people where he passed
Swayed as the reeds sway in the blast,
Under the spell of a voice which took
In its compass the flow of Siloa's brook,
And the mystical chime of the bells of gold
On the ephod's hem of the priest of old,—
Now the roll of thunder, and now the awe
Of the trumpet heard in the Mount of Law.

A solemn fear on the listening crowd
Fell like the shadow of a cloud.
The sailor reeling from out the ships
Whose masts stood thick in the river-slips
Felt the jest and the curse die on his lips.
Listened the fisherman rude and hard,
The calker rough from the builder's yard;
The man of the market left his load,
The teamster leaned on his bending goad,
The maiden, and youth beside her, felt
Their hearts in a closer union melt,
And saw the flowers of their love in bloom
Down the endless vistas of life to come.
Old age sat feebly brushing away
From his ears the scanty locks of gray;
And careless boyhood, living the free
Unconscious life of bird and tree,
Suddenly wakened to a sense
Of sin and its guilty consequence.
It was as if an angel's voice
Called the listeners up for their final choice;
As if a strong hand rent apart
The veils of sense from soul and heart,
Showing in light ineffable
The joys of heaven and woes of hell!
All about in the misty air
The hills seemed kneeling in silent prayer;
The rustle of leaves, the moaning sedge,
The water's lap on its gravelled edge,
The wailing pines, and, far and faint,
The wood-dove's note of sad complaint,—
To the solemn voice of the preacher lent
An undertone as of low lament;
And the rote of the sea from its sandy coast,
On the easterly wind, now heard, now lost,
Seemed the murmurous sound of the judgment host.

Yet wise men doubted, and good men wept,
As that storm of passion above them swept,

And, comet-like, adding flame to flame,
The priests of the new Evangel came,—
Davenport, flashing upon the crowd,
Charged like summer's electric cloud,
Now holding the listener still as death
With terrible warnings under breath,
Now shouting for joy, as if he viewed
The vision of Heaven's beatitude!
And Celtic Tennant, his long coat bound
Like a monk's with leathern girdle round,
Wild with the toss of unshorn hair,
And wringing of hands, and eyes aglare,
Groaning under the world's despair!
Grave pastors, grieving their flocks to lose,
Prophesied to the empty pews
That gourds would wither, and mush-
rooms die,
And noisiest fountains run soonest dry,
Like the spring that gushed in Newbury
Street,
Under the tramp of the earthquake's feet,
A silver shaft in the air and light,
For a single day, then lost in night,
Leaving only, its place to tell,
Sandy fissure and sulphurous smell.
With zeal wing-clipped and white-heat
cool,
Moved by the spirit in grooves of rule,
No longer harried, and cropped, and
fleeced,
Flogged by sheriff and cursed by priest,
But by wiser counsels left at ease
To settle quietly on his lees,
And, self-concentred, to count as done
The work which his fathers well begun,
In silent protest of letting alone,
The Quaker kept the way of his own,—
A non-conductor among the wires,
With coat of asbestos proof to fires.
And quite unable to mend his pace
To catch the falling manna of grace,
He hugged the closer his little store
Of faith, and silently prayed for more.
And vague of creed and barren of rite,
But holding, as in his Master's sight,
Act and thought to the inner light,
The round of his simple duties walked,
And strove to live what the others talked.

And who shall marvel if evil went
Step by step with the good intent,
And with love and meekness, side by side,
Lust of the flesh and spiritual pride?—
That passionate longings and fancies vain
Set the heart on fire and crazed the brain?
That over the holy oracles
Folly sported with cap and bells?
That goodly women and learned men
Marvelling told with tongue and pen
How unweaned children chirped like birds
Texts of Scripture and solemn words,
Like the infant seers of the rocky glens
In the Puy de Dome of wild Cevennes:
Or baby Lamas who pray and preach
From Tartar cradles in Buddha's speech?

In the war which Truth or Freedom wages
With impious fraud and the wrong of ages,
Hate and malice and self-love mar
The notes of triumph with painful jar,
And the helping angels turn aside
Their sorrowing faces the shame to hide.
Never on custom's oiled grooves
The world to a higher level moves,
But grates and grinds with friction hard
On granite boulder and flinty shard.
The heart must bleed before it feels,
The pool be troubled before it heals;
Ever by losses the right must gain,
Every good have its birth of pain;
The active Virtues blush to find
The Vices wearing their badge behind,
And Graces and Charities feel the fire
Wherein the sins of the age expire;
The fiend still rends as of old he rent
The tortured body from which he went.

But Time tests all. In the over-drift
And flow of the Nile, with its annual gift,
Who cares for the Hadji's relics sunk?
Who thinks of the drowned-out Coptic
monk?
The tide that loosens the temple's stones,
And scatters the sacred ibis-bones,
Drives away from the valley-land
That Arab robber, the wandering sand,
Moistens the fields that know no rain,
Fringes the desert with belts of grain,
And bread to the sower brings again.
So the flood of emotion deep and strong
Troubled the land as it swept along,
But left a result of holier lives,
Tenderer mothers and worthier wives.

The husband and father whose children fled
And sad wife wept when his drunken tread
Frightened peace from his roof-tree's shade,
And a rock of offence his hearthstone made,
In a strength that was not his own began
To rise from the brute's to the plane of man.
Old friends embraced, long held apart
By evil counsel and pride of heart;
And penitence saw through misty tears,
In the bow of hope on its cloud of fears,
The promise of Heaven's eternal years,—
The peace of God for the world's annoy,—
Beauty for ashes, and oil of joy!

Under the church of Federal Street,
Under the tread of its Sabbath feet,
Walled about by its basement stones,
Lie the marvellous preacher's bones.
No saintly honors to them are shown,
No sign nor miracle have they known;
But he who passes the ancient church
Stops in the shade of its belfry-porch,
And ponders the wonderful life of him
Who lies at rest in that charnel dim.
Long shall the traveller strain his eye
From the railroad car, as it plunges by,
And the vanishing town behind him search
For the slender spire of the Whitefield Church;
And feel for one moment the ghosts of trade,
And fashion, and folly, and pleasure laid,
By the thought of that life of pure intent,
That voice of warning yet eloquent,
Of one on the errands of angels sent.
And if where he labored the flood of sin
Like a tide from the harbor-bar sets in,
And over a life of time and sense
The church-spires lift their vain defence,
As if to scatter the bolts of God
With the points of Calvin's thunder-rod,—
Still, as the gem of its civic crown,
Precious beyond the world's renown,
His memory hallows the ancient town!

1859.

THE TRUCE OF PISCATAQUA.

In the winter of 1675–76, the Eastern Indians, who had been making war upon the New Hampshire settlements, were so reduced in numbers by fighting and famine that they agreed to a peace with Major Waldron at Dover; but the peace was broken in the fall of 1676. The famous chief, Squando, was the principal negotiator on the part of the savages. He had taken up the hatchet to revenge the brutal treatment of his child by drunken white sailors, which caused its death.

It not unfrequently happened during the Border wars that young white children were adopted by their Indian captors, and so kindly treated that they were unwilling to leave the free, wild life of the woods; and in some instances they utterly refused to go back with their parents to their old homes and civilization.

Raze these long blocks of brick and stone,
These huge mill-monsters overgrown;
Blot out the humbler piles as well,
Where, moved like living shuttles, dwell
The weaving genii of the bell;
Tear from the wild Cocheco's track
The dams that hold its torrents back;
And let the loud-rejoicing fall
Plunge, roaring, down its rocky wall;
And let the Indian's paddle play
On the unbridged Piscataqua!
Wide over hill and valley spread
Once more the forest, dusk and dread,
With here and there a clearing cut
From the walled shadows round it shut;
Each with its farm-house builded rude,
By English yeoman squared and hewed,
And the grim, flankered block-house bound
With bristling palisades around.
So, haply shall before thine eyes
The dusty veil of centuries rise,
The old, strange scenery overlay
The tamer pictures of to-day,
While, like the actors in a play,
Pass in their ancient guise along
The figures of my border song:
What time beside Cocheco's flood
The white man and the red man stood,
With words of peace and brotherhood;
When passed the sacred calumet
From lip to lip with fire-draught wet,

And, puffed in scorn, the peace-pipe's smoke
Through the gray beard of Waldron broke,
And Squando's voice, in suppliant plea
For mercy, struck the haughty key
Of one who held, in any fate,
His native pride inviolate!

'Let your ears be opened wide!
He who speaks has never lied.
Waldron of Piscataqua,
Hear what Squando has to say!

'Squando shuts his eyes and sees,
Far off, Saco's hemlock-trees.
In his wigwam, still as stone,
Sits a woman all alone,

'Wampum beads and birchen strands
Dropping from her careless hands,
Listening ever for the fleet
Patter of a dead child's feet!

'When the moon a year ago
Told the flowers the time to blow,
In that lonely wigwam smiled
Menewee, our little child.

'Ere that moon grew thin and old,
He was lying still and cold;
Sent before us, weak and small,
When the Master did not call!

'On his little grave I lay;
Three times went and came the day,
Thrice above me blazed the noon,
Thrice upon me wept the moon.

'In the third night-watch I heard,
Far and low, a spirit-bird;
Very mournful, very wild,
Sang the totem of my child.

'"Menewee, poor Menewee,
Walks a path he cannot see:
Let the white man's wigwam light
With its blaze his steps aright.

'"All-uncalled, he dares not show
Empty hands to Manito:
Better gifts he cannot bear
Than the scalps his slayers wear."

'All the while the totem sang,
Lightning blazed and thunder rang;
And a black cloud, reaching high,
Pulled the white moon from the sky.

'I, the medicine-man, whose ear
All that spirits hear can hear,—
I, whose eyes are wide to see
All the things that are to be,—

'Well I knew the dreadful signs
In the whispers of the pines,
In the river roaring loud,
In the mutter of the cloud.

'At the breaking of the day,
From the grave I passed away;
Flowers bloomed round me, birds sang glad,
But my heart was hot and mad.'

'There is rust on Squando's knife,
From the warm, red springs of life;
On the funeral hemlock-trees
Many a scalp the totem sees.

'Blood for blood! But evermore
Squando's heart is sad and sore;
And his poor squaw waits at home
For the feet that never come!

'Waldron of Cocheco, hear!
Squando speaks, who laughs at fear;
Take the captives he has ta'en;
Let the land have peace again!'

As the words died on his tongue,
Wide apart his warriors swung;
Parted, at the sign he gave,
Right and left, like Egypt's wave.

And, like Israel passing free
Through the prophet-charmed sea,
Captive mother, wife, and child
Through the dusky terror filed.

One alone, a little maid,
Middleway her steps delayed,
Glancing, with quick, troubled sight,
Round about from red to white.

Then his hand the Indian laid
On the little maiden's head,
Lightly from her forehead fair
Smoothing back her yellow hair.

'Gift or favor ask I none;
What I have is all my own:
Never yet the birds have sung,
"Squando hath a beggar's tongue."

'Yet for her who waits at home,
For the dead who cannot come,
Let the little Gold-hair be
In the place of Menewee!

'Mishanock, my little star!
Come to Saco's pines afar;
Where the sad one waits at home
Wequashim, my moonlight, come!'

'What!' quoth Waldron, 'leave a child
Christian-born to heathens wild?
As God lives, from Satan's hand
I will pluck her as a brand!'

'Hear me, white man!' Squando cried;
'Let the little one decide.
Wequashim, my moonlight, say,
Wilt thou go with me, or stay?'

Slowly, sadly, half afraid,
Half regretfully, the maid
Owned the ties of blood and race,—
Turned from Squando's pleading face.

Not a word the Indian spoke,
But his wampum chain he broke,
And the beaded wonder hung
On that neck so fair and young.

Silence-shod, as phantoms seem
In the marches of a dream,
Single-filed, the grim array
Through the pine-trees wound away.

Doubting, trembling, sore amazed,
Through her tears the young child gazed.
'God preserve her!' Waldron said;
'Satan hath bewitched the maid!'

Years went and came. At close of day
Singing came a child from play,
Tossing from her loose-locked head
Gold in sunshine, brown in shade.

Pride was in the mother's look,
But her head she gravely shook,
And with lips that fondly smiled
Feigned to chide her truant child.

Unabashed, the maid began:
'Up and down the brook I ran,
Where, beneath the bank so steep,
Lie the spotted trout asleep.

'"Chip!" went squirrel on the wall,
After me I heard him call,
And the cat-bird on the tree
Tried his best to mimic me.

'Where the hemlocks grew so dark
That I stopped to look and hark,
On a log, with feather-hat,
By the path, an Indian sat.

'Then I cried, and ran away;
But he called, and bade me stay;
And his voice was good and mild
As my mother's to her child.

'And he took my wampum chain,
Looked and looked it o'er again;
Gave me berries, and, beside,
On my neck a plaything tied.'

Straight the mother stooped to see
What the Indian's gift might be.
On the braid of wampum hung,
Lo! a cross of silver swung.

Well she knew its graven sign,
Squando's bird and totem pine;
And, a mirage of the brain,
Flowed her childhood back again.

Flashed the roof the sunshine through,
Into space the walls outgrew;
On the Indian's wigwam-mat,
Blossom-crowned, again she sat.

Cool she felt the west-wind blow,
In her ear the pines sang low,
And, like links from out a chain,
Dropped the years of care and pain.

From the outward toil and din,
From the griefs that gnaw within,
To the freedom of the woods
Called the birds, and winds, and floods.

Well, O painful minister!
Watch thy flock, but blame not her,
If her ear grew sharp to hear
All their voices whispering near.

Blame her not, as to her soul
All the desert's glamour stole,
That a tear for childhood's loss
Dropped upon the Indian's cross.

When, that night, the Book was read,
And she bowed her widowed head,
And a prayer for each loved name
Rose like incense from a flame,

With a hope the creeds forbid
In her pitying bosom hid,
To the listening ear of Heaven
Lo! the Indian's name was given.

1860.

MY PLAYMATE.

[When written, this poem bore the title *Eleanor*, and when first printed *The Playmate*.]

The pines were dark on Ramoth hill,
Their song was soft and low;
The blossoms in the sweet May wind
Were falling like the snow.

The blossoms drifted at our feet,
The orchard birds sang clear;
The sweetest and the saddest day
It seemed of all the year.

For, more to me than birds or flowers,
My playmate left her home,
And took with her the laughing spring,
The music and the bloom.

She kissed the lips of kith and kin,
She laid her hand in mine:
What more could ask the bashful boy
Who fed her father's kine?

She left us in the bloom of May:
The constant years told o'er
Their seasons with as sweet May morns,
But she came back no more.

I walk, with noiseless feet, the round
Of uneventful years;
Still o'er and o'er I sow the spring
And reap the autumn ears.

She lives where all the golden year
Her summer roses blow;
The dusky children of the sun
Before her come and go.

There haply with her jewelled hands
She smooths her silken gown,—
No more the homespun lap wherein
I shook the walnuts down.

The wild grapes wait us by the brook,
The brown nuts on the hill,
And still the May-day flowers make sweet
The woods of Follymill.

The lilies blossom in the pond,
The bird builds in the tree,
The dark pines sing on Ramoth hill
The slow song of the sea.

I wonder if she thinks of them,
And how the old time seems,—
If ever the pines of Ramoth wood
Are sounding in her dreams.

I see her face, I hear her voice;
Does she remember mine?
And what to her is now the boy
Who fed her father's kine?

What cares she that the orioles build
For other eyes than ours,—
That other hands with nuts are filled,
And other laps with flowers?

O playmate in the golden time!
Our mossy seat is green,
Its fringing violets blossom yet,
The old trees o'er it lean.

The winds so sweet with birch and fern
A sweeter memory blow;
And there in spring the veeries sing
The song of long ago.

And still the pines of Ramoth wood
Are moaning like the sea,—
The moaning of the sea of change
Between myself and thee!

1860.

COBBLER KEEZAR'S VISION.

This ballad was written on the occasion of a Horticultural Festival. Cobbler Keezar was a noted character among the first settlers in the valley of the Merrimac.[16]

THE beaver cut his timber
With patient teeth that day,
The minks were fish-wards, and the crows
Surveyors of highway,—

When Keezar sat on the hillside
Upon his cobbler's form,
With a pan of coals on either hand
To keep his waxed-ends warm.

And there, in the golden weather,
He stitched and hammered and sung;
In the brook he moistened his leather,
In the pewter mug his tongue.

Well knew the tough old Teuton
Who brewed the stoutest ale,
And he paid the goodwife's reckoning
In the coin of song and tale.

The songs they still are singing
Who dress the hills of vine,
The tales that haunt the Brocken
And whisper down the Rhine.

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,
The swift stream wound away,
Through birches and scarlet maples
Flashing in foam and spray,—

Down on the sharp-horned ledges
Plunging in steep cascade,
Tossing its white-maned waters
Against the hemlock's shade.

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,
East and west and north and south;
Only the village of fishers
Down at the river's mouth;

Only here and there a clearing,
With its farm-house rude and new,
And tree-stumps, swart as Indians,
Where the scanty harvest grew.

No shout of home-bound reapers,
No vintage-song he heard,
And on the green no dancing feet
The merry violin stirred.

'Why should folk be glum,' said Keezar,
'When Nature herself is glad,
And the painted woods are laughing
At the faces so sour and sad?'

Small heed had the careless cobbler
What sorrow of heart was theirs
Who travailed in pain with the births of God,
And planted a state with prayers,—

Hunting of witches and warlocks,
Smiting the heathen horde,—
One hand on the mason's trowel,
And one on the soldier's sword!

But give him his ale and cider,
Give him his pipe and song,
Little he cared for Church or State,
Or the balance of right and wrong.

"T is work, work, work,' he muttered,—
'And for rest a snuffle of psalms!'
He smote on his leathern apron
With his brown and waxen palms.

'Oh for the purple harvests
Of the days when I was young!
For the merry grape-stained maidens,
And the pleasant songs they sung!

'Oh for the breath of vineyards,
Of apples and nuts and wine!
For an oar to row and a breeze to blow
Down the grand old river Rhine!'

A tear in his blue eye glistened,
And dropped on his beard so gray.
'Old, old am I,' said Keezar,
'And the Rhine flows far away!'

But a cunning man was the cobbler;
He could call the birds from the trees,
Charm the black snake out of the ledges,
And bring back the swarming bees.

All the virtues of herbs and metals,
All the lore of the woods, he knew,
And the arts of the Old World mingled
With the marvels of the New.

Well he knew the tricks of magic,
And the lapstone on his knee
Had the gift of the Mormon's goggles
Or the stone of Doctor Dee.[17]

For the mighty master Agrippa
Wrought it with spell and rhyme
From a fragment of mystic moonstone
In the tower of Nettesheim.

To a cobbler Minnesinger
The marvellous stone gave he,—
And he gave it, in turn, to Keezar,
Who brought it over the sea.

He held up that mystic lapstone,
He held it up like a lens,
And he counted the long years coming
By twenties and by tens.

'One hundred years,' quoth Keezar,
'And fifty have I told:
Now open the new before me,
And shut me out the old!'

Like a cloud of mist, the blackness
Rolled from the magic stone,
And a marvellous picture mingled
The unknown and the known.

Still ran the stream to the river,
And river and ocean joined;
And there were the bluffs and the blue sea-line
And cold north hills behind.

But the mighty forest was broken
By many a steepled town,
By many a white-walled farm-house,
And many a garner-brown.

Turning a score of mill-wheels,
The stream no more ran free;
White sails on the winding river,
White sails on the far-off sea.

Below in the noisy village
The flags were floating gay,
And shone on a thousand faces
The light of a holiday.

Swiftly the rival ploughmen
Turned the brown earth from their shares;
Here were the farmer's treasures,
There were the craftsman's wares.

Golden the goodwife's butter,
Ruby her currant-wine;
Grand were the strutting turkeys,
Fat were the beeves and swine.

Yellow and red were the apples,
And the ripe pears russet-brown,
And the peaches had stolen blushes
From the girls who shook them down.

And with blooms of hill and wildwood,
That shame the toil of art,
Mingled the gorgeous blossoms
Of the garden's tropic heart.

'What is it I see?' said Keezar:
'Am I here, or am I there?
Is it a fête at Bingen?
Do I look on Frankfort fair?

'But where are the clowns and puppets,
And imps with horns and tail?
And where are the Rhenish flagons?
And where is the foaming ale?

'Strange things, I know, will happen,—
Strange things the Lord permits;
But that droughty folk should be jolly
Puzzles my poor old wits.

'Here are smiling manly faces,
And the maiden's step is gay;
Nor sad by thinking, nor mad by drinking,
Nor mopes, nor fools, are they.

'Here 's pleasure without regretting,
And good without abuse,
The holiday and the bridal
Of beauty and of use.

'Here 's a priest and there is a Quaker,
Do the cat and dog agree?
Have they burned the stocks for oven-wood?
Have they cut down the gallows-tree?

'Would the old folk know their children?
Would they own the graceless town,
With never a ranter to worry
And never a witch to drown?'

Loud laughed the cobbler Keezar,
Laughed like a school-boy gay;
Tossing his arms above him,
The lapstone rolled away.

It rolled down the rugged hillside,
It spun like a wheel bewitched,
It plunged through the leaning willows,
And into the river pitched.

There, in the deep, dark water,
The magic stone lies still,
Under the leaning willows
In the shadow of the hill.

But oft the idle fisher
Sits on the shadowy bank,
And his dreams make marvellous pictures
Where the wizard's lapstone sank.

And still, in the summer twilights,
When the river seems to run
Out from the inner glory,
Warm with the melted sun,

The weary mill-girl lingers
Beside the charmëd stream,
And the sky and the golden water
Shape and color her dream.

Fair wave the sunset gardens,
The rosy signals fly;
Her homestead beckons from the cloud,
And love goes sailing by.

1861.

AMY WENTWORTH.

TO WILLIAM BRADFORD.

As they who watch by sick-beds find relief
Unwittingly from the great stress of grief
And anxious care, in fantasies outwrought
From the hearth's embers flickering low, or caught
From whispering wind, or tread of passing feet,
Or vagrant memory calling up some sweet
Snatch of old song or romance, whence or why
They scarcely know or ask,—so, thou and I,
Nursed in the faith that Truth alone is strong
In the endurance which outwearies Wrong,
With meek persistence baffling brutal force,
And trusting God against the universe,—
We, doomed to watch a strife we may not share
With other weapons than the patriot's prayer,
Yet owning, with full hearts and moistened eyes,
The awful beauty of self-sacrifice,
And wrung by keenest sympathy for all
Who give their loved ones for the living wall
'Twixt law and treason,—in this evil day
May haply find, through automatic play
Of pen and pencil, solace to our pain,
And hearten others with the strength we gain.
I know it has been said our times require
No play of art, nor dalliance with the lyre,
No weak essay with Fancy's chloroform
To calm the hot, mad pulses of the storm,
But the stern war-blast rather, such as sets
The battle's teeth of serried bayonets,
And pictures grim as Vernet's. Yet with these
Some softer tints may blend, and milder keys
Relieve the storm-stunned ear. Let us keep sweet,
If so we may, our hearts, even while we eat
The bitter harvest of our own device
And half a century's moral cowardice.
As Nürnberg sang while Wittenberg defied,
And Kranach painted by his Luther's side,
And through the war-march of the Puritan
The silver stream of Marvell's music ran,
So let the household melodies be sung,
The pleasant pictures on the wall be hung,—
So let us hold against the hosts of night
And slavery all our vantage-ground of light.
Let Treason boast its savagery, and shake
From its flag-folds its symbol rattlesnake,

Nurse its fine arts, lay human skins in tan,
And carve its pipe-bowls from the bones of man,
And make the tale of Fijian banquets dull
By drinking whiskey from a loyal skull,—
But let us guard, till this sad war shall cease,
(God grant it soon!) the graceful arts of peace:
No foes are conquered who the victors teach
Their vandal manners and barbaric speech.

And while, with hearts of thankfulness, we bear
Of the great common burden our full share,
Let none upbraid us that the waves entice
Thy sea-dipped pencil, or some quaint device,
Rhythmic and sweet, beguiles my pen away
From the sharp strifes and sorrows of to-day.
Thus, while the east-wind keen from Labrador
Sings in the leafless elms, and from the shore
Of the great sea comes the monotonous roar
Of the long-breaking surf, and all the sky
Is gray with cloud, home-bound and dull, I try
To time a simple legend to the sounds
Of winds in the woods, and waves on pebbled bounds,—
A song for oars to chime with, such as might
Be sung by tired sea-painters, who at night
Look from their hemlock camps, by quiet cove
Or beach, moon-lighted, on the waves they love.
(So hast thou looked, when level sunset lay
On the calm bosom of some Eastern bay,
And all the spray-moist rocks and waves that rolled
Up the white sand-slopes flashed with ruddy gold.)
Something it has—a flavor of the sea,
And the sea's freedom—which reminds of thee.
Its faded picture, dimly smiling down
From the blurred fresco of the ancient town,
I have not touched with warmer tints in vain,
If, in this dark, sad year, it steals one thought from pain.

Her fingers shame the ivory keys
They dance so light along;
The bloom upon her parted lips
Is sweeter than the song.

O perfumed suitor, spare thy smiles!
Her thoughts are not of thee;
She better loves the salted wind,
The voices of the sea.

Her heart is like an outbound ship
That at its anchor swings;
The murmur of the stranded shell
Is in the song she sings.

She sings, and, smiling, hears her praise,
But dreams the while of one
Who watches from his sea-blown deck
The icebergs in the sun.

She questions all the winds that blow,
And every fog-wreath dim,
And bids the sea-birds flying north
Bear messages to him.

She speeds them with the thanks of men
He perilled life to save,
And grateful prayers like holy oil
To smooth for him the wave.

Brown Viking of the fishing-smack!
Fair toast of all the town!—
The skipper's jerkin ill beseems
The lady's silken gown!

But ne'er shall Amy Wentworth wear
For him the blush of shame
Who dares to set his manly gifts
Against her ancient name.

The stream is brightest at its spring,
And blood is not like wine;
Nor honored less than he who heirs
Is he who founds a line.

Full lightly shall the prize be won,
If love be Fortune's spur;
And never maiden stoops to him
Who lifts himself to her.

Her home is brave in Jaffrey Street,
With stately stairways worn
By feet of old Colonial knights
And ladies gentle-born.

Still green about its ample porch
The English ivy twines,
Trained back to show in English oak
The herald's carven signs.

And on her, from the wainscot old,
Ancestral faces frown,—
And this has worn the soldier's sword,
And that the judge's gown.

But, strong of will and proud as they,
She walks the gallery floor
As if she trod her sailor's deck
By stormy Labrador!

The sweetbrier blooms on Kittery-side,
And green are Elliot's bowers;
Her garden is the pebbled beach,
The mosses are her flowers.

She looks across the harbor-bar
To see the white gulls fly;
His greeting from the Northern sea
Is in their clanging cry.

She hums a song, and dreams that he,
As in its romance old,
Shall homeward ride with silken sails
And masts of beaten gold!

Oh, rank is good, and gold is fair,
And high and low mate ill;
But love has never known a law
Beyond its own sweet will!

1862.

THE COUNTESS.

TO E. W.

I inscribed this poem to Dr. Elias Weld of Haverhill, Massachusetts, to whose kindness I was much indebted in my boyhood. He was the one cultivated man in the neighborhood. His small but well-chosen library was placed at my disposal. He is the 'wise old doctor' of *Snow-Bound*.

Count François de Vipart with his cousin Joseph Rochemont de Poyen came to the United States in the early part of the present century. They took up their residence at Rocks Village on the Merrimac, where they both married. The wife of Count Vipart was Mary Ingalls, who, as my father remembered her, was a very lovely young girl. Her wedding dress, as described by a lady still living, was 'pink satin with an overdress of white lace, and white satin slippers.' She died in less than a year after her marriage. Her husband returned to his native country. He lies buried in the family tomb of the Viparts at Bordeaux.[18]

I KNOW not, Time and Space so intervene,
Whether, still waiting with a trust serene,
Thou bearest up thy fourscore years and ten,
Or, called at last, art now Heaven's citizen;
But, here or there, a pleasant thought of thee,
Like an old friend, all day has been with me.
The shy, still boy, for whom thy kindly hand
Smoothed his hard pathway to the wonderland
Of thought and fancy, in gray manhood yet
Keeps green the memory of his early debt.
To-day, when truth and falsehood speak their words
Through hot-lipped cannon and the teeth of swords,
Listening with quickened heart and ear intent
To each sharp clause of that stern argument,
I still can hear at times a softer note
Of the old pastoral music round me float,

While through the hot gleam of our civil strife
Looms the green mirage of a simpler life.
As, at his alien post, the sentinel
Drops the old bucket in the homestead well,
And hears old voices in the winds that toss
Above his head the live-oak's beard of moss,
So, in our trial-time, and under skies
Shadowed by swords like Islam's paradise,
I wait and watch, and let my fancy stray
To milder scenes and youth's Arcadian day;
And howsoe'er the pencil dipped in dreams
Shades the brown woods or tints the sunset streams,
The country doctor in the foreground seems,
Whose ancient sulky down the village lanes
Dragged, like a war-car, captive ills and pains.
I could not paint the scenery of my song,
Mindless of one who looked thereon so long;
Who, night and day, on duty's lonely round,
Made friends o' the woods and rocks, and knew the sound
Of each small brook, and what the hillside trees
Said to the winds that touched their leafy keys;
Who saw so keenly and so well could paint
The village-folk, with all their humors quaint,—
The parson ambling on his wall-eyed roan,
Grave and erect, with white hair backward blown;
The tough old boatman, half amphibious grown;
The muttering witch-wife of the gossip's tale,
And the loud straggler levying his blackmail,—
Old customs, habits, superstitions, fears,
All that lies buried under fifty years.
To thee, as is most fit, I bring my lay,
And, grateful, own the debt I cannot pay.

Over the wooded northern ridge,
Between its houses brown,
To the dark tunnel of the bridge
The street comes straggling down.

You catch a glimpse, through birch and pine,
Of gable, roof, and porch,
The tavern with its swinging sign,
The sharp horn of the church.

The river's steel-blue crescent curves
To meet, in ebb and flow,
The single broken wharf that serves
For sloop and gundelow.

With salt sea-scents along its shores
The heavy hay-boats crawl,
The long antennæ of their oars
In lazy rise and fall.

Along the gray abutment's wall
The idle shad-net dries;
The toll-man in his cobbler's stall
Sits smoking with closed eyes.

You hear the pier's low undertone
Of waves that chafe and gnaw;
You start,—a skipper's horn is blown
To raise the creaking draw.

At times a blacksmith's anvil sounds
With slow and sluggard beat,
Or stage-coach on its dusty rounds
Wakes up the staring street.

A place for idle eyes and ears,
A cobwebbed nook of dreams;
Left by the stream whose waves are years
The stranded village seems.

And there, like other moss and rust,
The native dweller clings,
And keeps, in uninquiring trust,
The old, dull round of things.

The fisher drops his patient lines,
The farmer sows his grain,
Content to hear the murmuring pines
Instead of railroad train.

Go where, along the tangled steep
That slopes against the west,
The hamlet's buried idlers sleep
In still profounder rest.

Throw back the locust's flowery plume,
The birch's pale-green scarf,
And break the web of brier and bloom
From name and epitaph.

A simple muster-roll of death,
Of pomp and romance shorn,
The dry, old names that common breath
Has cheapened and outworn.

Yet pause by one low mound, and part
The wild vines o'er it laced,
And read the words by rustic art
Upon its headstone traced.

Haply yon white-haired villager
Of fourscore years can say
What means the noble name of her
Who sleeps with common clay.

An exile from the Gascon land
Found refuge here and rest,
And loved, of all the village band,
Its fairest and its best.

He knelt with her on Sabbath morns,
He worshipped through her eyes,
And on the pride that doubts and scorns
Stole in her faith's surprise.

Her simple daily life he saw
By homeliest duties tried,
In all things by an untaught law
Of fitness justified.

For her his rank aside he laid;
He took the hue and tone
Of lowly life and toil, and made
Her simple ways his own.

Yet still, in gay and careless ease,
To harvest-field or dance
He brought the gentle courtesies,
The nameless grace of France.

And she who taught him love not less
From him she loved in turn
Caught in her sweet unconsciousness
What love is quick to learn.

Each grew to each in pleased accord,
Nor knew the gazing town
If she looked upward to her lord
Or he to her looked down.

How sweet, when summer's day was o'er,
His violin's mirth and wail,
The walk on pleasant Newbury's shore,
The river's moonlit sail!

Ah! life is brief, though love be long;
The altar and the bier,
The burial hymn and bridal song,
Were both in one short year!

Her rest is quiet on the hill,
Beneath the locust's bloom;
Far off her lover sleeps as still
Within his scutcheoned tomb.

The Gascon lord, the village maid,
In death still clasp their hands;
The love that levels rank and grade
Unites their severed lands.

What matter whose the hillside grave,
Or whose the blazoned stone?
Forever to her western wave
Shall whisper blue Garonne!

O Love!—so hallowing every soil
That gives thy sweet flower room,
Wherever, nursed by ease or toil,
The human heart takes bloom!—

Plant of lost Eden, from the sod
Of sinful earth unriven,
White blossom of the trees of God
Dropped down to us from heaven!—

This tangled waste of mound and stone
Is holy for thy sake;
A sweetness which is all thy own
Breathes out from fern and brake.

And while ancestral pride shall twine
The Gascon's tomb with flowers,
Fall sweetly here, O song of mine,
With summer's bloom and showers!

And let the lines that severed seem
Unite again in thee,
As western wave and Gallic stream
Are mingled in one sea!

1863.

AMONG THE HILLS.

This poem, when originally published, was dedicated to Annie Fields, wife of the distinguished publisher, James T. Fields, of Boston, in grateful acknowledgment of the strength and inspiration I have found in her friendship and sympathy.

The poem in its first form was entitled *The Wife: an Idyl of Bearcamp Water*, and appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1868. When I published the volume *Among the Hills*, in December of the same year, I expanded the Prelude and filled out also the outlines of the story.

PRELUDE.

ALONG the roadside, like the flowers of gold
That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,
And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,
Wing-weary with its long flight from the south,
Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf
With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,
Confesses it. The locust by the wall
Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.
A single hay-cart down the dusty road
Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep
On the load's top. Against the neighboring hill,
Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,
The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift still
Defied the dog-star. Through the open door
A drowsy smell of flowers—gray heliotrope,
And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette—
Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends
To the pervading symphony of peace.

No time is this for hands long over-worn
To task their strength: and (unto Him be praise
Who giveth quietness!) the stress and strain
Of years that did the work of centuries
Have ceased, and we can draw our breath once more
Freely and full. So, as yon harvesters
Make glad their nooning underneath the elms
With tale and riddle and old snatch of song,
I lay aside grave themes, and idly turn
The leaves of memory's sketch-book, dreaming o'er
Old summer pictures of the quiet hills,
And human life, as quiet, at their feet.

And yet not idly all. A farmer's son
Proud of field-lore and harvest craft, and feeling
All their fine possibilities, how rich
And restful even poverty and toil
Become when beauty, harmony, and love
Sit at their humble hearth as angels sat
At evening in the patriarch's tent, when man
Makes labor noble, and his farmer's frock
The symbol of a Christian chivalry
Tender and just and generous to her
Who clothes with grace all duty; still, I know
Too well the picture has another side,—
How wearily the grind of toil goes on
Where love is wanting, how the eye and ear
And heart are starved amidst the plenitude
Of nature, and how hard and colorless
Is life without an atmosphere. I look
Across the lapse of half a century,
And call to mind old homesteads, where no flower
Told that the spring had come, but evil weeds,
Nightshade and rough-leaved burdock in the place
Of the sweet doorway greeting of the rose

And honeysuckle, where the house walls seemed
Blistering in sun, without a tree or vine
To cast the tremulous shadow of its leaves
Across the curtainless windows, from whose panes
Fluttered the signal rags of shiftlessness.
Within, the cluttered kitchen floor, unwashed
(Broom-clean I think they called it); the best room
Stifling with cellar-damp, shut from the air
In hot midsummer, bookless, pictureless
Save the inevitable sampler hung
Over the fireplace, or a mourning piece,
A green-haired woman, peony-cheeked, beneath
Impossible willows; the wide-throated hearth
Bristling with faded pine-boughs half concealing
The piled-up rubbish at the chimney's back;
And, in sad keeping with all things about them,
Shrill, querulous women, sour and sullen men,
Untidy, loveless, old before their time,
With scarce a human interest save their own
Monotonous round of small economies,
Or the poor scandal of the neighborhood;
Blind to the beauty everywhere revealed,
Treading the May-flowers with regardless feet;
For them the song-sparrow and the bobolink
Sang not, nor winds made music in the leaves;
For them in vain October's holocaust
Burned, gold and crimson, over all the hills,
The sacramental mystery of the woods.
Church-goers, fearful of the unseen Powers,
But grumbling over pulpit-tax and pew-rent,
Saving, as shrewd economists, their souls
And winter pork with the least possible outlay
Of salt and sanctity; in daily life
Showing as little actual comprehension
Of Christian charity and love and duty,
As if the Sermon on the Mount had been
Outdated like a last year's almanac:
Rich in broad woodlands and in half-tilled fields,
And yet so pinched and bare and comfortless,
The veriest straggler limping on his rounds,
The sun and air his sole inheritance,
Laughed at a poverty that paid its taxes,
And hugged his rags in self-complacency!

Not such should be the homesteads of a land
Where whoso wisely wills and acts may dwell
As king and lawgiver, in broad-acred state,
With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to make
His hour of leisure richer than a life
Of fourscore to the barons of old time,
Our yeoman should be equal to his home
Set in the fair, green valleys, purple walled,
A man to match his mountains, not to creep
Dwarfed and abased below them. I would fain
In this light way (of which I needs must own
With the knife-grinder of whom Canning sings,
'Story, God bless you! I have none to tell you!')
Invite the eye to see and heart to feel
The beauty and the joy within their reach,—
Home, and home loves, and the beatitudes
Of nature free to all. Haply in years
That wait to take the places of our own,
Heard where some breezy balcony looks down
On happy homes, or where the lake in the moon
Sleeps dreaming of the mountains, fair as Ruth,

In the old Hebrew pastoral, at the feet
Of Boaz, even this simple lay of mine
May seem the burden of a prophecy,
Finding its late fulfilment in a change
Slow as the oak's growth, lifting manhood up
Through broader culture, finer manners, love,
And reverence, to the level of the hills.

O Golden Age, whose light is of the dawn,
And not of sunset, forward, not behind,
Flood the new heavens and earth, and with thee bring
All the old virtues, whatsoever things
Are pure and honest and of good repute,
But add thereto whatever bard has sung
Or seer has told of when in trance and dream
They saw the Happy Isles of prophecy!
Let Justice hold her scale, and Truth divide
Between the right and wrong; but give the heart
The freedom of its fair inheritance;
Let the poor prisoner, cramped and starved so long,
At Nature's table feast his ear and eye
With joy and wonder; let all harmonies
Of sound, form, color, motion, wait upon
The princely guest, whether in soft attire
Of leisure clad, or the coarse frock of toil,
And, lending life to the dead form of faith,
Give human nature reverence for the sake
Of One who bore it, making it divine
With the ineffable tenderness of God;
Let common need, the brotherhood of prayer,
The heirship of an unknown destiny,
The unsolved mystery round about us, make
A man more precious than the gold of Ophir.
Sacred, inviolate, unto whom all things
Should minister, as outward types and signs
Of the eternal beauty which fulfils
The one great purpose of creation, Love,
The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven!

For weeks the clouds had raked the hills
And vexed the vales with raining,
And all the woods were sad with mist,
And all the brooks complaining.

At last, a sudden night-storm tore
The mountain veils asunder,
And swept the valleys clean before
The besom of the thunder.

Through Sandwich notch the west-wind sang
Good morrow to the cotter;
And once again Chocorua's horn
Of shadow pierced the water.

Above his broad lake Ossipee,
Once more the sunshine wearing,
Stooped, tracing on that silver shield
His grim armorial bearing.

Clear drawn against the hard blue sky,
The peaks had winter's keenness;
And, close on autumn's frost, the vales
Had more than June's fresh greenness.

Again the sodden forest floors
With golden lights were checkered,
Once more rejoicing leaves in wind
And sunshine danced and flickered.

It was as if the summer's late
Atoning for its sadness
Had borrowed every season's charm
To end its days in gladness.

I call to mind those banded vales
Of shadow and of shining,
Through which, my hostess at my side,
I drove in day's declining.

We held our sideling way above
The river's whitening shallows,
By homesteads old, with wide-flung barns
Swept through and through by swallows;

By maple orchards, belts of pine
And larches climbing darkly
The mountain slopes, and, over all,
The great peaks rising starkly.

You should have seen that long hill-range
With gaps of brightness riven,—
How through each pass and hollow streamed
The purpling lights of heaven,—

Rivers of gold-mist flowing down
From far celestial fountains,—
The great sun flaming through the rifts
Beyond the wall of mountains!

We paused at last where home-bound cows
Brought down the pasture's treasure,
And in the barn the rhythmic flails
Beat out a harvest measure.

We heard the night-hawk's sullen plunge,
The crow his tree-mates calling:
The shadows lengthening down the slopes
About our feet were falling.

And through them smote the level sun
In broken lines of splendor,
Touched the gray rocks and made the green
Of the shorn grass more tender.

The maples bending o'er the gate,
Their arch of leaves just tinted
With yellow warmth, the golden glow
Of coming autumn hinted.

Keen white between the farm-house showed,
And smiled on porch and trellis,
The fair democracy of flowers
That equals cot and palace.

And weaving garlands for her dog,
'Twixt chidings and caresses,
A human flower of childhood shook
The sunshine from her tresses.

On either hand we saw the signs
Of fancy and of shrewdness,
Where taste had wound its arms of vines
Round thrift's uncomely rudeness.

The sun-brown farmer in his frock
Shook hands, and called to Mary:
Bare-armed, as Juno might, she came,
White-aproned from her dairy.

Her air, her smile, her motions, told
Of womanly completeness;
A music as of household songs
Was in her voice of sweetness.

Not fair alone in curve and line,
But something more and better,
The secret charm eluding art,
Its spirit, not its letter;—

An inborn grace that nothing lacked
Of culture or appliance,—
The warmth of genial courtesy,
The calm of self-reliance.

Before her queenly womanhood
How dared our hostess utter
The paltry errand of her need
To buy her fresh-churned butter?

She led the way with housewife pride,
Her goodly store disclosing,
Full tenderly the golden balls
With practised hands disposing.

Then, while along the western hills
We watched the changeful glory
Of sunset, on our homeward way,
I heard her simple story.

The early crickets sang; the stream
Flashed through my friend's narration:
Her rustic patois of the hills
Lost in my free translation.

'More wise,' she said, 'than those who swarm
Our hills in middle summer,
She came, when June's first roses blow,
To greet the early comer.

'From school and ball and rout she came,
The city's fair, pale daughter,
To drink the wine of mountain air
Beside the Bearcamp Water.

'Her step grew firmer on the hills
That watch our homesteads over;
On cheek and lip, from summer fields,
She caught the bloom of clover.

'For health comes sparkling in the streams
From cool Chocorua stealing:
There 's iron in our Northern winds;
Our pines are trees of healing.

'She sat beneath the broad-armed elms
That skirt the mowing meadow,
And watched the gentle west-wind weave
The grass with shine and shadow.

'Beside her, from the summer heat
To share her grateful screening,
With forehead bared, the farmer stood,
Upon his pitchfork leaning.

'Framed in its damp, dark locks, his face
Had nothing mean or common,—
Strong, manly, true, the tenderness
And pride beloved of woman.

'She looked up, glowing with the health
The country air had brought her,
And, laughing, said: "You lack a wife,
Your mother lacks a daughter.

'"To mend your frock and bake your bread
You do not need a lady:
Be sure among these brown old homes
Is some one waiting ready,—

'"Some fair, sweet girl with skilful hand
And cheerful heart for treasure,
Who never played with ivory keys,
Or danced the polka's measure."

'He bent his black brows to a frown,
He set his white teeth tightly.
"'T is well," he said, "for one like you
To choose for me so lightly.

'"You think, because my life is rude
I take no note of sweetness:
I tell you love has naught to do
With meetness or unmeetness.

'"Itself its best excuse, it asks
No leave of pride or fashion
When silken zone or homespun frock
It stirs with throbs of passion.

'"You think me deaf and blind: you bring
Your winning graces hither
As free as if from cradle-time
We two had played together.

'"You tempt me with your laughing eyes,
Your cheek of sundown's blushes,
A motion as of waving grain,
A music as of thrushes.

'"The plaything of your summer sport,
The spells you weave around me
You cannot at your will undo,
Nor leave me as you found me.

'"You go as lightly as you came,
Your life is well without me;
What care you that these hills will close
Like prison-walls about me?

'"No mood is mine to seek a wife,
Or daughter for my mother:
Who loves you loses in that love
All power to love another!

'"I dare your pity or your scorn,
With pride your own exceeding;
I fling my heart into your lap
Without a word of pleading."

'She looked up in his face of pain
So archly, yet so tender:
"And if I lend you mine," she said,
"Will you forgive the lender?

'"Nor frock nor tan can hide the man;
And see you not, my farmer,
How weak and fond a woman waits
Behind the silken armor?

'"I love you: on that love alone,
And not my worth, presuming,
Will you not trust for summer fruit
The tree in May-day blooming?"

'Alone the hangbird overhead,
His hair-swung cradle straining,
Looked down to see love's miracle,—
The giving that is gaining.

'And so the farmer found a wife,
His mother found a daughter:
There looks no happier home than hers
On pleasant Bearcamp Water.

'Flowers spring to blossom where she walks
The careful ways of duty;
Our hard, stiff lines of life with her
Are flowing curves of beauty.

'Our homes are cheerier for her sake,
Our door-yards brighter blooming,
And all about the social air
Is sweeter for her coming.

'Unspoken homilies of peace
Her daily life is preaching;
The still refreshment of the dew
Is her unconscious teaching.

'And never tenderer hand than hers
Unknits the brow of ailing;
Her garments to the sick man's ear
Have music in their trailing.

'And when, in pleasant harvest moons,
The youthful huskers gather,
Or sleigh-drives on the mountain ways
Defy the winter weather,—

'In sugar-camps, when south and warm
The winds of March are blowing,
And sweetly from its thawing veins
The maple's blood is flowing,—

'In summer, where some lilied pond
Its virgin zone is baring,
Or where the ruddy autumn fire
Lights up the apple-paring,—

'The coarseness of a ruder time
Her finer mirth displaces,
A subtler sense of pleasure fills
Each rustic sport she graces.

'Her presence lends its warmth and health
To all who come before it.
If woman lost us Eden, such
As she alone restore it.

'For larger life and wiser aims
The farmer is her debtor;
Who holds to his another's heart
Must needs be worse or better.

'Through her his civic service shows
A purer-toned ambition;
No double consciousness divides
The man and politician.

'In party's doubtful ways he trusts
Her instincts to determine;
At the loud polls, the thought of her
Recalls Christ's Mountain Sermon.

'He owns her logic of the heart,
And wisdom of unreason,
Supplying, while he doubts and weighs,
The needed word in season.

'He sees with pride her richer thought,
Her fancy's freer ranges;
And love thus deepened to respect
Is proof against all changes.

'And if she walks at ease in ways
His feet are slow to travel,
And if she reads with cultured eyes
What his may scarce unravel,

'Still clearer, for her keener sight
Of beauty and of wonder,
He learns the meaning of the hills
He dwelt from childhood under.

'And higher, warmed with summer lights,
Or winter-crowned and hoary,
The ridged horizon lifts for him
Its inner veils of glory.

'He has his own free, bookless lore,
The lessons nature taught him,
The wisdom which the woods and hills
And toiling men have brought him:

'The steady force of will whereby
Her flexile grace seems sweeter;
The sturdy counterpoise which makes
Her woman's life completer;

'A latent fire of soul which lacks
No breath of love to fan it;
And wit, that, like his native brooks,
Plays over solid granite.

'How dwarfed against his manliness
She sees the poor pretension,
The wants, the aims, the follies, born
Of fashion and convention!

'How life behind its accidents
Stands strong and self-sustaining,
The human fact transcending all
The losing and the gaining.

'And so in grateful interchange
Of teacher and of hearer,
Their lives their true distinctness keep
While daily drawing nearer.

'And if the husband or the wife
In home's strong light discovers
Such slight defaults as failed to meet
The blinded eyes of lovers,

'Why need we care to ask?—who dreams
Without their thorns of roses,
Or wonders that the truest steel
The readiest spark discloses?

'For still in mutual sufferance lies
The secret of true living;
Love scarce is love that never knows
The sweetness of forgiving.

'We send the Squire to General Court,
He takes his young wife thither;
No prouder man election day
Rides through the sweet June weather.

'He sees with eyes of manly trust
All hearts to her inclining;
Not less for him his household light
That others share its shining.'

Thus, while my hostess spake, there grew
Before me, warmer tinted
And outlined with a tenderer grace,
The picture that she hinted.

The sunset smouldered as we drove
Beneath the deep hill-shadows.
Below us wreaths of white fog walked
Like ghosts the haunted meadows.

Sounding the summer night, the stars
Dropped down their golden plummets;
The pale arc of the Northern lights
Rose o'er the mountain summits,

Until, at last, beneath its bridge,
We heard the Bearcamp flowing,
And saw across the mapled lawn
The welcome home-lights glowing.

And, musing on the tale I heard,
'T were well, thought I, if often
To rugged farm-life came the gift
To harmonize and soften;

If more and more we found the troth
Of fact and fancy plighted,
And culture's charm and labor's strength
In rural homes united,—
The simple life, the homely hearth,
With beauty's sphere surrounding,
And blessing toil where toil abounds
With graces more abounding.

1868.

THE DOLE OF JARL THORKELL.

The land was pale with famine
And racked with fever-pain;
The frozen fiords were fishless,
The earth withheld her grain.

Men saw the boding Fylgja
Before them come and go,
And, through their dreams, the Urdar-moon
From west to east sailed slow!

Jarl Thorkell of Thevera
At Yule-time made his vow;
On Rykdal's holy Doom-stone
He slew to Frey his cow.

To bounteous Frey he slew her;
To Skuld, the younger Norn,
Who watches over birth and death,
He gave her calf unborn.

And his little gold-haired daughter
Took up the sprinkling-rod,
And smeared with blood the temple
And the wide lips of the god.

Hoarse below, the winter water
Ground its ice-blocks o'er and o'er;
Jets of foam, like ghosts of dead waves,
Rose and fell along the shore.

The red torch of the Jokul,
Aloft in icy space,
Shone down on the bloody Horg-stones
And the statue's carven face.

And closer round and grimmer
Beneath its baleful light
The Jotun shapes of mountains
Came crowding through the night.

The gray-haired Hersir trembled
As a flame by wind is blown;
A weird power moved his white lips,
And their voice was not his own!

'The Æsir thirst!' he muttered;
'The gods must have more blood
Before the tun shall blossom
Or fish shall fill the flood.

'The Æsir thirst and hunger,
And hence our blight and ban;
The mouths of the strong gods water
For the flesh and blood of man!

'Whom shall we give the strong ones?
Not warriors, sword on thigh;
But let the nursling infant
And bedrid old man die.'

'So be it!' cried the young men,
'There needs nor doubt nor parle.'
But, knitting hard his red brows,
In silence stood the Jarl.

A sound of woman's weeping
At the temple door was heard,
But the old men bowed their white heads,
And answered not a word.

Then the Dream-wife of Thingvalla,
A Vala young and fair,
Sang softly, stirring with her breath
The veil of her loose hair.

She sang: 'The winds from Alfheim
Bring never sound of strife;
The gifts for Frey the meetest
Are not of death, but life.

'He loves the grass-green meadows,
The grazing kine's sweet breath;
He loathes your bloody Horg-stones,
Your gifts that smell of death.

'No wrong by wrong is righted,
No pain is cured by pain;
The blood that smokes from Doom-rings
Falls back in redder rain.

'The gods are what you make them,
As earth shall Asgard prove;
And hate will come of hating,
And love will come of love.

'Make dole of skyr and black bread
That old and young may live;
And look to Frey for favor
When first like Frey you give.

'Even now o'er Njord's sea-meadows
The summer dawn begins:
The tun shall have its harvest,
The fiord its glancing fins.'

Then up and swore Jarl Thorkell:
'By Gimli and by Hel,
O Vala of Thingvalla,
Thou singest wise and well!

'Too dear the Æsir's favors
Bought with our children's lives;
Better die than shame in living
Our mothers and our wives.

'The full shall give his portion
To him who hath most need;
Of curdled skyr and black bread,
Be daily dole decreed.'

He broke from off his neck-chain
Three links of beaten gold;
And each man, at his bidding,
Brought gifts for young and old.

Then mothers nursed their children,
And daughters fed their sires,
And Health sat down with Plenty
Before the next Yule fires.

The Horg-stones stand in Rykdal;
The Doom-ring still remains;
But the snows of a thousand winters
Have washed away the stains.

Christ ruleth now; the Æsir
Have found their twilight dim;
And, wiser than she dreamed, of old
The Vala sang of Him!

1868.

THE TWO RABBINS.

The Rabbi Nathan twoscore years and ten
Walked blameless through the evil world, and then,
Just as the almond blossomed in his hair,
Met a temptation all too strong to bear,
And miserably sinned. So, adding not
Falsehood to guilt, he left his seat, and taught

No more among the elders, but went out
From the great congregation girt about
With sackcloth, and with ashes on his head,
Making his gray locks grayer. Long he prayed,
Smiting his breast; then, as the Book he laid
Open before him for the Bath-Col's choice,
Pausing to hear that Daughter of a Voice,
Behold the royal preacher's words: 'A friend
Loveth at all times, yea, unto the end;
And for the evil day thy brother lives.'
Marvelling, he said: 'It is the Lord who gives
Counsel in need. At Ecbatana dwells
Rabbi Ben Isaac, who all men excels
In righteousness and wisdom, as the trees
Of Lebanon the small weeds that the bees
Bow with their weight. I will arise, and lay
My sins before him.'

And he went his way
Barefooted, fasting long, with many prayers;
But even as one who, followed unawares,
Suddenly in the darkness feels a hand
Thrill with its touch his own, and his cheek fanned
By odors subtly sweet, and whispers near
Of words he loathes, yet cannot choose but hear,
So, while the Rabbi journeyed, chanting low
The wail of David's penitential woe,
Before him still the old temptation came,
And mocked him with the motion and the shame
Of such desires that, shuddering, he abhorred
Himself; and, crying mightily to the Lord
To free his soul and cast the demon out,
Smote with his staff the blankness round about.

At length, in the low light of a spent day,
The towers of Ecbatana far away
Rose on the desert's rim; and Nathan, faint
And footsore, pausing where for some dead saint
The faith of Islam reared a domëd tomb,
Saw some one kneeling in the shadow, whom
He greeted kindly: 'May the Holy One
Answer thy prayers, O stranger!' Whereupon
The shape stood up with a loud cry, and then,
Clasped in each other's arms, the two gray men
Wept, praising Him whose gracious providence
Made their paths one. But straightway, as the sense
Of his transgression smote him, Nathan tore
Himself away: 'O friend beloved, no more
Worthy am I to touch thee, for I came,
Foul from my sins, to tell thee, all my shame.
Haply thy prayers, since naught availeth mine,
May purge my soul, and make it white like thine.
Pity me, O Ben Isaac, I have sinned!'

Awestruck Ben Isaac stood. The desert wind
Blew his long mantle backward, laying bare
The mournful secret of his shirt of hair.
'I too, O friend, if not in act,' he said,
'In thought have verily sinned. Hast thou not read,
'Better the eye should see than that desire
Should wander?' Burning with a hidden fire
That tears and prayers quench not, I come to thee
For pity and for help, as thou to me.
Pray for me, O my friend!' But Nathan cried,
'Pray thou for me, Ben Isaac!'

Side by side
In the low sunshine by the turban stone
They knelt; each made his brother's woe his own,

Forgetting, in the agony and stress
Of pitying love, his claim of selfishness;
Peace, for his friend besought, his own became;
His prayers were answered in another's name;
And, when at last they rose up to embrace,
Each saw God's pardon in his brother's face!

Long after, when his headstone gathered moss,
Traced on the targum-marge of Onkelos
In Rabbi Nathan's hand these words were read:

'Hope not the cure of sin till Self is dead;
Forget it in love's service, and the debt
Thou canst not pay the angels shall forget;
Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone;
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thy own!'

1868.

NOREMBEGA.

Norembega, or Norimbegue, is the name given by early French fishermen and explorers to a fabulous country south of Cape Breton, first discovered by Verrazzani in 1524. It was supposed to have a magnificent city of the same name on a great river, probably the Penobscot. The site of this barbaric city is laid down on a map published at Antwerp in 1570. In 1604 Champlain sailed in search of the Northern Eldorado, twenty-two leagues up the Penobscot from the Isle Haute. He supposed the river to be that of Norembega, but wisely came to the conclusion that those travellers who told of the great city had never seen it. He saw no evidences of anything like civilization, but mentions the finding of a cross, very old and mossy, in the woods.

THE winding way the serpent takes
The mystic water took,
From where, to count its beaded lakes,
The forest sped its brook.

A narrow space 'twixt shore and shore,
For sun or stars to fall,
While evermore, behind, before,
Closed in the forest wall.

The dim wood hiding underneath
Wan flowers without a name;
Life tangled with decay and death,
League after league the same.

Unbroken over swamp and hill
The rounding shadow lay,
Save where the river cut at will
A pathway to the day.

Beside that track of air and light,
Weak as a child unweaned,
At shut of day a Christian knight
Upon his henchman leaned.

The embers of the sunset's fires
Along the clouds burned down;
'I see,' he said, 'the domes and spires
Of Norembega town.'

'Alack! the domes, O master mine,
Are golden clouds on high;
Yon spire is but the branchless pine
That cuts the evening sky.'

'Oh, hush and hark! What sounds are these
But chants and holy hymns?'
'Thou hear'st the breeze that stirs the trees
Through all their leafy limbs.'

'Is it a chapel bell that fills
The air with its low tone?'
'Thou hear'st the tinkle of the rills,
The insect's vesper drone.'

'The Christ be praised!—He sets for me
A blessed cross in sight!'
'Now, nay, 't is but yon blasted tree
With two gaunt arms outright!'

'Be it wind so sad or tree so stark,
It mattereth not, my knave;
Methinks to funeral hymns I hark,
The cross is for my grave!

'My life is sped; I shall not see
My home-set sails again;
The sweetest eyes of Normandie
Shall watch for me in vain.

'Yet onward still to ear and eye
The baffling marvel calls;
I fain would look before I die
On Norembega's walls.

'So, haply, it shall be thy part
At Christian feet to lay
The mystery of the desert's heart
My dead hand plucked away.

'Leave me an hour of rest; go thou
And look from yonder heights;
Perchance the valley even now
Is starred with city lights.'

The henchman climbed the nearest hill,
He saw nor tower nor town,
But, through the drear woods, lone and still,
The river rolling down.

He heard the stealthy feet of things
Whose shapes he could not see,
A flutter as of evil wings,
The fall of a dead tree.

The pines stood black against the moon,
A sword of fire beyond;
He heard the wolf howl, and the loon
Laugh from his reedy pond.

He turned him back: 'O master dear,
We are but men misled;
And thou hast sought a city here
To find a grave instead.'

'As God shall will! what matters where
A true man's cross may stand,
So Heaven be o'er it here as there
In pleasant Norman land?

'These woods, perchance, no secret hide
Of lordly tower and hall;
Yon river in its wanderings wide
Has washed no city wall;

'Yet mirrored in the sullen stream
The holy stars are given:
Is Norembega, then, a dream
Whose waking is in Heaven?

'No builded wonder of these lands
My weary eyes shall see;
A city never made with hands
Alone awaiteth me—

'"*Urbs Syon mystica;*" I see
Its mansions passing fair,
"*Condita cælo;*" let me be,
Dear Lord, a dweller there!'

Above the dying exile hung
The vision of the bard,
As faltered on his failing tongue
The song of good Bernard.

The henchman dug at dawn a grave
Beneath the hemlocks brown,
And to the desert's keeping gave
The lord of fief and town.

Years after, when the Sieur Champlain
Sailed up the unknown stream,
And Norembega proved again
A shadow and a dream,

He found the Norman's nameless grave
Within the hemlock's shade,
And, stretching wide its arms to save,
The sign that God had made,

The cross-boughed tree that marked the spot
And made it holy ground:
He needs the earthly city not
Who hath the heavenly found.

1869.

MIRIAM.

TO FREDERICK A. P. BARNARD.

[When Whittier was an editor in Hartford, Mr. Barnard, afterward President of Columbia College, was a teacher in the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb in that place. Both men were at the time especially interested in Eastern history and romance.]

THE years are many since, in youth and hope,
Under the Charter Oak, our horoscope
We drew thick-studded with all favoring stars.
Now, with gray beards, and faces seamed with scars
From life's hard battle, meeting once again,
We smile, half sadly, over dreams so vain;
Knowing, at last, that it is not in man
Who walketh to direct his steps, or plan
His permanent house of life. Alike we loved

The muses' haunts, and all our fancies moved
To measures of old song. How since that day
Our feet have parted from the path that lay
So fair before us! Rich, from lifelong search
Of truth, within thy Academic porch
Thou sittest now, lord of a realm of fact,
Thy servitors the sciences exact;
Still listening with thy hand on Nature's keys,
To hear the Samian's spheral harmonies
And rhythm of law. I, called from dream and song,
Thank God! so early to a strife so long,
That, ere it closed, the black, abundant hair
Of boyhood rested silver-sown and spare
On manhood's temples, now at sunset-chime
Tread with fond feet the path of morning time.
And if perchance too late I linger where
The flowers have ceased to blow, and trees are bare,
Thou, wiser in thy choice, wilt scarcely blame
The friend who shields his folly with thy name.

AMESBURY, *10th mo.*, 1870.

One Sabbath day my friend and I
After the meeting, quietly
Passed from the crowded village lanes,
White with dry dust for lack of rains,
And climbed the neighboring slope, with feet
Slackened and heavy from the heat,
Although the day was wellnigh done,
And the low angle of the sun
Along the naked hillside cast
Our shadows as of giants vast.
We reached, at length, the topmost swell,
Whence, either way, the green turf fell
In terraces of nature down
To fruit-hung orchards, and the town
With white, pretenceless houses, tall
Church-steeples, and, o'ershadowing all,
Huge mills whose windows had the look
Of eager eyes that ill could brook
The Sabbath rest. We traced the track
Of the sea-seeking river back,
Glistening for miles above its mouth,
Through the long valley to the south,
And, looking eastward, cool to view,
Stretched the illimitable blue
Of ocean, from its curved coast-line;
Sombred and still, the warm sunshine
Filled with pale gold-dust all the reach
Of slumberous woods from hill to beach,—
Slanted on walls of thronged retreats
From city toil and dusty streets,
On grassy bluff, and dune of sand,
And rocky islands miles from land;
Touched the far-glancing sails, and showed
White lines of foam where long waves flowed
Dumb in the distance. In the north,
Dim through their misty hair, looked forth
The space-dwarfed mountains to the sea,
From mystery to mystery!

So, sitting on that green hill-slope,
We talked of human life, its hope
And fear, and unsolved doubts, and what
It might have been, and yet was not.
And, when at last the evening air
Grew sweeter for the bells of prayer
Ringing in steeples far below,
We watched the people churchward go,
Each to his place, as if thereon
The true shekinah only shone;
And my friend queried how it came
To pass that they who owned the same
Great Master still could not agree
To worship Him in company.
Then, broadening in his thought, he ran
Over the whole vast field of man,—
The varying forms of faith and creed
That somehow served the holders' need;
In which, unquestioned, undenied,
Uncounted millions lived and died;
The bibles of the ancient folk,
Through which the heart of nations spoke;
The old moralities which lent
To home its sweetness and content,
And rendered possible to bear
The life of peoples everywhere:

And asked if we, who boast of light,
Claim not a too exclusive right
To truths which must for all be meant,
Like rain and sunshine freely sent.
In bondage to the letter still,
We give it power to cramp and kill,—
To tax God's fulness with a scheme
Narrower than Peter's house-top dream,
His wisdom and his love with plans
Poor and inadequate as man's.
It must be that He witnesses
Somehow to all men that He is:
That something of His saving grace
Reaches the lowest of the race,
Who, through strange creed and rite, may draw
The hints of a diviner law.
We walk in clearer light;—but then,
Is He not God?—are they not men?
Are His responsibilities
For us alone and not for these?

And I made answer: 'Truth is one;
And, in all lands beneath the sun,
Whoso hath eyes to see may see
The tokens of its unity.
No scroll of creed its fulness wraps,
We trace it not by school-boy maps,
Free as the sun and air it is
Of latitudes and boundaries.
In Vedic verse, in dull Korán,
Are messages of good to man;
The angels to our Aryan sires
Talked by the earliest household fires;
The prophets of the elder day,
The slant-eyed sages of Cathay,
Read not the riddle all amiss
Of higher life evolved from this.

'Nor doth it lessen what He taught,
Or make the gospel Jesus brought
Less precious, that His lips retold
Some portion of that truth of old;
Denying not the proven seers,
The tested wisdom of the years;
Confirming with His own impress
The common law of righteousness.
We search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
From all old flower-fields of the soul;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read,
And all our treasure of old thought
In His harmonious fulness wrought
Who gathers in one sheaf complete
The scattered blades of God's sown wheat,
The common growth that maketh good
His all-embracing Fatherhood.

'Wherever through the ages rise
The altars of self-sacrifice,
Where love its arms has opened wide,
Or man for man has calmly died,
I see the same white wings outspread
That hovered o'er the Master's head!
Up from undated time they come,
The martyr souls of heathendom,
And to His cross and passion bring
Their fellowship of suffering.
I trace His presence in the blind
Pathetic gropings of my kind,—
In prayers from sin and sorrow wrung,
In cradle-hymns of life they sung,
Each, in its measure, but a part
Of the unmeasured Over-heart;
And with a stronger faith confess
The greater that it owns the less.
Good cause it is for thankfulness
That the world-blessing of His life
With the long past is not at strife;
That the great marvel of His death
To the one order witnesseth,
No doubt of changeless goodness wakes,
No link of cause and sequence breaks,
But, one with nature, rooted is
In the eternal verities;
Whereby, while differing in degree
As finite from infinity,
The pain and loss for others borne,
Love's crown of suffering meekly worn,
The life man giveth for his friend
Becomes vicarious in the end;
Their healing place in nature take,
And make life sweeter for their sake.

'So welcome I from every source
The tokens of that primal Force,
Older than heaven itself, yet new
As the young heart it reaches to,

Beneath whose steady impulse rolls
The tidal wave of human souls;
Guide, comforter, and inward word,
The eternal spirit of the Lord!
Nor fear I aught that science brings
From searching through material things;
Content to let its glasses prove,
Not by the letter's oldness move,
The myriad worlds on worlds that course
The spaces of the universe;
Since everywhere the Spirit walks
The garden of the heart, and talks
With man, as under Eden's trees,
In all his varied languages.
Why mourn above some hopeless flaw
In the stone tables of the law,
When scripture every day afresh
Is traced on tablets of the flesh?
By inward sense, by outward signs,
God's presence still the heart divines;
Through deepest joy of Him we learn,
In sorest grief to Him we turn,
And reason stoops its pride to share
The child-like instinct of a prayer.'

And then, as is my wont, I told
A story of the days of old,
Not found in printed books,—in sooth,
A fancy, with slight hint of truth,
Showing how differing faiths agree
In one sweet law of charity.
Meanwhile the sky had golden grown,
Our faces in its glory shone;
But shadows down the valley swept,
And gray below the ocean slept,
As time and space I wandered o'er
To tread the Mogul's marble floor,
And see a fairer sunset fall
On Jumna's wave and Agra's wall.

The good Shah Akbar (peace be his always!)
Came forth from the Divan at close of day
Bowed with the burden of his many cares,
Worn with the hearing of unnumbered prayers,—
Wild cries for justice, the importunate
Appeals of greed and jealousy and hate,
And all the strife of sect and creed and rite,
Santon and Gouroo waging holy fight:
For the wise monarch, claiming not to be
Allah's avenger, left his people free,
With a faint hope, his Book scarce justified,
That all the paths of faith, though severed wide,
O'er which the feet of prayerful reverence passed,
Met at the gate of Paradise at last.

He sought an alcove of his cool hareem,
Where, far beneath, he heard the Jumna's stream
Lapse soft and low along his palace wall,
And all about the cool sound of the fall
Of fountains, and of water circling free
Through marble ducts along the balcony;
The voice of women in the distance sweet,
And, sweeter still, of one who, at his feet,
Soothed his tired ear with songs of a far land
Where Tagus shatters on the salt sea-sand
The mirror of its cork-grown hills of drouth
And vales of vine, at Lisbon's harbor-mouth.

The date-palms rustled not; the peepul laid
Its topmost boughs against the balustrade,
Motionless as the mimic leaves and vines
That, light and graceful as the shawl-designs
Of Delhi or Umritsir, twined in stone;
And the tired monarch, who aside had thrown
The day's hard burden, sat from care apart,
And let the quiet steal into his heart
From the still hour. Below him Agra slept,
By the long light of sunset overswept:
The river flowing through a level land,
By mango-groves and banks of yellow sand,
Skirted with lime and orange, gay kiosks,
Fountains at play, tall minarets of mosques,
Fair pleasure-gardens, with their flowering trees
Relieved against the mournful cypresses;

And, air-poised lightly as the blown sea-foam,
The marble wonder of some holy dome
Hung a white moonrise over the still wood,
Glassing its beauty in a stiller flood.

Silent the monarch gazed, until the night
Swift-falling hid the city from his sight;
Then to the woman at his feet he said: 'Tell me, O Miriam, something thou hast read
In childhood of the Master of thy faith,
Whom Islam also owns. Our Prophet saith:
"He was a true apostle, yea, a Word
And Spirit sent before me from the Lord."
Thus the Book witnesseth; and well I know
By what thou art, O dearest, it is so.
As the lute's tone the maker's hand betrays,
The sweet disciple speaks her Master's praise.'

Then Miriam, glad of heart, (for in some sort
She cherished in the Moslem's liberal court
The sweet traditions of a Christian child;
And, through her life of sense, the undefiled
And chaste ideal of the sinless One
Gazed on her with an eye she might not shun,—
The sad, reproachful look of pity, born
Of love that hath no part in wrath or scorn,)
Began, with low voice and moist eyes, to tell
Of the all-loving Christ, and what befell
When the fierce zealots, thirsting for her blood,
Dragged to His feet a shame of womanhood.
How, when His searching answer pierced within
Each heart, and touched the secret of its sin,
And her accusers fled His face before,
He bade the poor one go and sin no more.

And Akbar said, after a moment's thought,
'Wise is the lesson by thy prophet taught;
Woe unto him who judges and forgets
What hidden evil his own heart besets!
Something of this large charity I find
In all the sects that sever humankind;
I would to Allah that their lives agreed
More nearly with the lesson of their creed!
Those yellow Lamas who at Meerut pray
By wind and water power, and love to say:
"He who forgiveth not shall, unforgiven,
Fail of the rest of Buddha," and who even
Spare the black gnat that stings them, vex my ears
With the poor hates and jealousies and fears
Nursed in their human hives. That lean, fierce priest
Of thy own people, (be his heart increased
By Allah's love!) his black robes smelling yet
Of Goa's roasted Jews, have I not met
Meek-faced, barefooted, crying in the street
The saying of his prophet true and sweet,—
"He who is merciful shall mercy meet!"'

But, next day, so it chanced, as night began
To fall, a murmur through the hareem ran
That one, recalling in her dusky face
The full-lipped, mild-eyed beauty of a race
Known as the blameless Ethiops of Greek song,
Plotting to do her royal master wrong,
Watching, reproachful of the lingering light,
The evening shadows deepen for her flight,
Love-guided, to her home in a far land,
Now waited death at the great Shah's command.

Shapely as that dark princess for whose smile
A world was bartered, daughter of the Nile

Herself, and veiling in her large, soft eyes
The passion and the languor of her skies,
The Abyssinian knelt low at the feet
Of her stern lord: 'O king, if it be meet,
And for thy honor's sake,' she said, 'that I,
Who am the humblest of thy slaves, should die,
I will not tax thy mercy to forgive.
Easier it is to die than to outlive
All that life gave me,—him whose wrong of thee
Was but the outcome of his love for me,
Cherished from childhood, when, beneath the shade
Of templed Axum, side by side we played.
Stolen from his arms, my lover followed me
Through weary seasons over land and sea;
And two days since, sitting disconsolate
Within the shadow of the hareem gate,
Suddenly, as if dropping from the sky,
Down from the lattice of the balcony
Fell the sweet song by Tigre's cowherds sung
In the old music of his native tongue.
He knew my voice, for love is quick of ear,
Answering in song.
This night he waited near
To fly with me. The fault was mine alone:
He knew thee not, he did but seek his own;
Who, in the very shadow of thy throne,
Sharing thy bounty, knowing all thou art,
Greatest and best of men, and in her heart
Grateful to tears for favor undeserved,
Turned ever homeward, nor one moment swerved
From her young love. He looked into my eyes,
He heard my voice, and could not otherwise
Than he hath done; yet, save one wild embrace
When first we stood together face to face,
And all that fate had done since last we met
Seemed but a dream and left us children yet,
He hath not wronged thee nor thy royal bed:
Spare him, O king! and slay me in his stead!'

But over Akbar's brows the frown hung black,
And, turning to the eunuch at his back,
'Take them,' he said, 'and let the Jumna's waves
Hide both my shame and these accursed slaves!'
His loathly length the unsexed bondman bowed:
'On my head be it!'
Straightway from a cloud
Of dainty shawls and veils of woven mist
The Christian Miriam rose, and, stooping, kissed
The monarch's hand. Loose down her shoulders bare
Swept all the rippled darkness of her hair,
Veiling the bosom that, with high, quick swell
Of fear and pity, through it rose and fell.

'Alas!' she cried, 'hast thou forgotten quite
The words of Him we spake of yesternight?
Or thy own prophet's, 'Whoso doth endure
And pardon, of eternal life is sure'?
O great and good! be thy revenge alone
Felt in thy mercy to the erring shown;
Let thwarted love and youth their pardon plead,
Who sinned but in intent, and not in deed!'

One moment the strong frame of Akbar shook
With the great storm of passion. Then his look
Softened to her uplifted face, that still
Pleaded more strongly than all words, until
Its pride and anger seemed like overblown,
Spent clouds of thunder left to tell alone

Of strife and overcoming. With bowed head,
And smiting on his bosom: 'God,' he said,
'Alone is great, and let His holy name
Be honored, even to His servant's shame!
Well spake thy prophet, Miriam,—he alone
Who hath not sinned is meet to cast a stone
At such as these, who here their doom await,
Held like myself in the strong grasp of fate.
They sinned through love, as I through love forgive;
Take them beyond my realm, but let them live!'

And, like a chorus to the words of grace,
The ancient Fakir, sitting in his place,
Motionless as an idol and as grim,
In the pavilion Akbar built for him
Under the court-yard trees, (for he was wise,
Knew Menu's laws, and through his close-shut eyes
Saw things far off, and as an open book
Into the thoughts of other men could look,)
Began, half chant, half howling, to rehearse
The fragment of a holy Vedic verse;
And thus it ran: 'He who all things forgives
Conquers himself and all things else, and lives
Above the reach of wrong or hate or fear,
Calm as the gods, to whom he is most dear.'

Two leagues from Agra still the traveller sees
The tomb of Akbar through its cypress-trees;
And, near at hand, the marble walls that hide
The Christian Begum sleeping at his side.
And o'er her vault of burial (who shall tell
If it be chance alone or miracle?)
The Mission press with tireless hand unrolls
The words of Jesus on its lettered scrolls,—
Tells, in all tongues, the tale of mercy o'er,
And bids the guilty, 'Go and sin no more!'

It now was dew-fall; very still
The night lay on the lonely hill,
Down which our homeward steps we bent,
And, silent, through great silence went,
Save that the tireless crickets played
Their long, monotonous serenade.
A young moon, at its narrowest,
Curved sharp against the darkening west;
And, momently, the beacon's star,
Slow wheeling o'er its rock afar,
From out the level darkness shot
One instant and again was not.
And then my friend spake quietly
The thought of both: 'Yon crescent see!
Like Islam's symbol-moon it gives
Hints of the light whereby it lives:
Somewhat of goodness, something true
From sun and spirit shining through
All faiths, all worlds, as through the dark
Of ocean shines the lighthouse spark,
Attests the presence everywhere
Of love and providential care.
The faith the old Norse heart confessed
In one dear name,—the hopefulest
And tenderest heard from mortal lips
In pangs of birth or death, from ships
Ice-bitten in the winter sea,
Or lisped beside a mother's knee,—
The wiser world hath not outgrown,
And the All-Father is our own!'

1870.

NAUHAUGHT, THE DEACON.

Nauhaught, the Indian deacon, who of old
Dwelt, poor but blameless, where his narrowing Cape
Stretches its shrunk arm out to all the winds
And the relentless smiting of the waves,

Awoke one morning from a pleasant dream
Of a good angel dropping in his hand
A fair, broad gold-piece, in the name of God.

He rose and went forth with the early day
Far inland, where the voices of the waves
Mellowed and mingled with the whispering leaves,
As, through the tangle of the low, thick woods,
He searched his traps. Therein nor beast nor bird
He found; though meanwhile in the reedy pools
The otter plashed, and underneath the pines
The partridge drummed: and as his thoughts went back
To the sick wife and little child at home,
What marvel that the poor man felt his faith
Too weak to bear its burden,—like a rope
That, strand by strand uncoiling, breaks above
The hand that grasps it. 'Even now, O Lord!
Send me,' he prayed, 'the angel of my dream!
Nauhaught is very poor; he cannot wait.'

Even as he spake he heard at his bare feet
A low, metallic clink, and, looking down,
He saw a dainty purse with disks of gold
Crowding its silken net. Awhile he held
The treasure up before his eyes, alone
With his great need, feeling the wondrous coins
Slide through his eager fingers, one by one.
So then the dream was true. The angel brought
One broad piece only; should he take all these?
Who would be wiser, in the blind, dumb woods?
The loser, doubtless rich, would scarcely miss
This dropped crumb from a table always full.

Still, while he mused, he seemed to hear the cry
Of a starved child; the sick face of his wife
Tempted him. Heart and flesh in fierce revolt
Urged the wild license of his savage youth
Against his later scruples. Bitter toil,
Prayer, fasting, dread of blame, and pitiless eyes
To watch his halting,—had he lost for these
The freedom of the woods;—the hunting-grounds
Of happy spirits for a walled-in heaven
Of everlasting psalms? One healed the sick
Very far off thousands of moons ago:
Had he not prayed him night and day to come
And cure his bed-bound wife? Was there a hell?
Were all his fathers' people writhing there—
Like the poor shell-fish set to boil alive—
Forever, dying never? If he kept
This gold, so needed, would the dreadful God
Torment him like a Mohawk's captive stuck
With slow-consuming splinters? Would the saints
And the white angels dance and laugh to see him
Burn like a pitch-pine torch? His Christian garb
Seemed falling from him; with the fear and shame
Of Adam naked at the cool of day,
He gazed around. A black snake lay in coil
On the hot sand, a crow with sidelong eye
Watched from a dead bough. All his Indian lore
Of evil blending with a convert's faith
In the supernal terrors of the Book,
He saw the Tempter in the coiling snake
And ominous, black-winged bird; and all the while
The low rebuking of the distant waves

Stole in upon him like the voice of God
Among the trees of Eden. Girding up
His soul's loins with a resolute hand, he thrust
The base thought from him: 'Nauhaught, be a man!
Starve, if need be; but, while you live, look out
From honest eyes on all men, unashamed.
God help me! I am deacon of the church,
A baptized, praying Indian! Should I do
This secret meanness, even the barken knots
Of the old trees would turn to eyes to see it,
The birds would tell of it, and all the leaves
Whisper above me: 'Nauhaught is a thief!'
The sun would know it, and the stars that hide
Behind his light would watch me, and at night
Follow me with their sharp, accusing eyes.
Yea, thou, God, seest me!' Then Nauhaught drew
Closer his belt of leather, dulling thus
The pain of hunger, and walked bravely back
To the brown fishing-hamlet by the sea;
And, pausing at the inn-door, cheerily asked:
'Who hath lost aught to-day?'
'I,' said a voice;
'Ten golden pieces, in a silken purse,
My daughter's handiwork.' He looked, and lo!
One stood before him in a coat of frieze,
And the glazed hat of a seafaring man,
Shrewd-faced, broad-shouldered, with no trace of wings.
Marvelling, he dropped within the stranger's hand
The silken web, and turned to go his way.
But the man said: 'A tithe at least is yours;
Take it in God's name as an honest man.'
And as the deacon's dusky fingers closed
Over the golden gift, 'Yea, in God's name
I take it, with a poor man's thanks,' he said.
So down the street that, like a river of sand,
Ran, white in sunshine, to the summer sea,
He sought his home, singing and praising God;
And when his neighbors in their careless way
Spoke of the owner of the silken purse—
A Wellfleet skipper, known in every port
That the Cape opens in its sandy wall—
He answered, with a wise smile, to himself:
'I saw the angel where they see a man.'

1870.

THE SISTERS.

Annie and Rhoda, sisters twain,
Woke in the night to the sound of rain.

The rush of wind, the ramp and roar
Of great waves climbing a rocky shore.

Annie rose up in her bed-gown white,
And looked out into the storm and night.

'Hush, and hearken!' she cried in fear,
'Hearest thou nothing, sister dear?'

'I hear the sea, and the plash of rain,
And roar of the northeast hurricane.

'Get thee back to the bed so warm,
No good comes of watching a storm.

'What is it to thee, I fain would know,
That waves are roaring and wild winds blow?

'No lover of thine 's afloat to miss
The harbor-lights on a night like this.'

'But I heard a voice cry out my name,
Up from the sea on the wind it came!

'Twice and thrice have I heard it call,
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!'

On her pillow the sister tossed her head.
'Hall of the Heron is safe,' she said.

'In the tautest schooner that ever swam
He rides at anchor in Annisquam.

'And, if in peril from swamping sea
Or lee shore rocks, would he call on thee?'

But the girl heard only the wind and tide,
And wringing her small white hands she cried:

'O sister Rhoda, there's something wrong;
I hear it again, so loud and long.

'"Annie! Annie!" I hear it call,
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!'

Up sprang the elder, with eyes aflame,
'Thou liest! He never would call thy name!

'If he did, I would pray the wind and sea
To keep him forever from thee and me!'

Then out of the sea blew a dreadful blast;
Like the cry of a dying man it passed.

The young girl hushed on her lips a groan,
But through her tears a strange light shone,—

The solemn joy of her heart's release
To own and cherish its love in peace.

'Dearest!' she whispered, under breath,
'Life was a lie, but true is death.

'The love I hid from myself away
Shall crown me now in the light of day.

'My ears shall never to wooer list,
Never by lover my lips be kissed.

'Sacred to thee am I henceforth,
Thou in heaven and I on earth!'

She came and stood by her sister's bed:
'Hall of the Heron is dead!' she said.

'The wind and the waves their work have done,
We shall see him no more beneath the sun.

'Little will reck that heart of thine;
It loved him not with a love like mine.

'I, for his sake, were he but here,
Could hem and 'broider thy bridal gear,

'Though hands should tremble and eyes be wet,
And stitch for stitch in my heart be set.

'But now my soul with his soul I wed;
Thine the living, and mine the dead!'

1871.

MARGUERITE.

MASSACHUSETTS BAY, 1760.

Upward of one thousand of the Acadian peasants forcibly taken from their homes on the Gaspereau and Basin of Minas were assigned to the several towns of the Massachusetts colony, the children being bound by the authorities to service or labor.

THE robins sang in the orchard, the buds into blossoms grew;
Little of human sorrow the buds and the robins knew!

Sick, in an alien household, the poor French neutral lay;
Into her lonesome garret fell the light of the April day,

Through the dusty window, curtained by the spider's warp and woof,
On the loose-laid floor of hemlock, on oaken ribs of roof,

The bedquilt's faded patchwork, the teacups on the stand,
The wheel with flaxen tangle, as it dropped from her sick hand!

What to her was the song of the robin, or warm morning light,
As she lay in the trance of the dying, heedless of sound or sight?

Done was the work of her hands, she had eaten her bitter bread;
The world of the alien people lay behind her dim and dead.

But her soul went back to its child-time; she saw the sun o'erflow
With gold the Basin of Minas, and set over Gaspereau;

The low, bare flats at ebb-tide, the rush of the sea at flood,
Through inlet and creek and river, from dike to upland wood;

The gulls in the red of morning, the fish-hawk's rise and fall,
The drift of the fog in moonshine, over the dark coast-wall.

She saw the face of her mother, she heard the song she sang;
And far off, faintly, slowly, the bell for vespers rang!

By her bed the hard-faced mistress sat, smoothing the wrinkled sheet,
Peering into the face, so helpless, and feeling the ice-cold feet.

With a vague remorse atoning for her greed and long abuse,
By care no longer heeded and pity too late for use.

Up the stairs of the garret softly the son of the mistress stepped,
Leaned over the head-board, covering his face with his hands, and wept.

Outspake the mother, who watched him sharply, with brow a-frown:
'What! love you the Papist, the beggar, the charge of the town?'

'Be she Papist or beggar who lies here, I know and God knows
I love her, and fain would go with her wherever she goes!

'O mother! that sweet face came pleading, for love so athirst.
You saw but the town-charge; I knew her God's angel at first.'

Shaking her gray head, the mistress hushed down a bitter cry;
And awed by the silence and shadow of death drawing nigh,

She murmured a psalm of the Bible; but closer the young girl pressed,
With the last of her life in her fingers, the cross to her breast.

'My son, come away,' cried the mother, her voice cruel grown.
'She is joined to her idols, like Ephraim; let her alone!'

But he knelt with his hand on her forehead, his lips to her ear,
And he called back the soul that was passing: 'Marguerite, do you hear?'

She paused on the threshold of Heaven; love, pity, surprise,
Wistful, tender, lit up for an instant the cloud of her eyes.

With his heart on his lips he kissed her, but never her cheek grew red,
And the words the living long for he spake in the ear of the dead.

And the robins sang in the orchard, where buds to blossoms grew;
Of the folded hands and the still face never the robins knew!

1871.

THE ROBIN.

My old Welsh neighbor over the way
Crept slowly out in the sun of spring,
Pushed from her ears the locks of gray,
And listened to hear the robin sing.

Her grandson, playing at marbles, stopped,
And, cruel in sport as boys will be,
Tossed a stone at the bird, who hopped
From bough to bough in the apple-tree.

'Nay!' said the grandmother; 'have you not heard,
My poor, bad boy! of the fiery pit,
And how, drop by drop, this merciful bird
Carries the water that quenches it?

'He brings cool dew in his little bill,
And lets it fall on the souls of sin:
You can see the mark on his red breast still
Of fires that scorch as he drops it in.

'My poor Bron rhuddyn! my breast-burned bird,
Singing so sweetly from limb to limb,
Very dear to the heart of Our Lord
Is he who pities the lost like Him!'

'Amen!' I said to the beautiful myth;
'Sing, bird of God, in my heart as well:
Each good thought is a drop wherewith
To cool and lessen the fires of hell.

'Prayers of love like rain-drops fall,
Tears of pity are cooling dew,
And dear to the heart of Our Lord are all
Who suffer like Him in the good they do!'

1871.

THE PENNSYLVANIA PILGRIM.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE beginning of German emigration to America may be traced to the personal influence of William Penn, who in 1677 visited the Continent, and made the acquaintance of an intelligent and highly cultivated circle of Pietists, or Mystics, who, reviving in the seventeenth century the spiritual faith and worship of Tauler and the 'Friends of God' in the fourteenth, gathered about the pastor Spener and the young and beautiful Eleonora Johanna Von Merlau. In this circle originated the Frankfort Land Company, which bought of William Penn, the Governor of Pennsylvania, a tract of land near the new city of Philadelphia.

The company's agent in the New World was a rising young lawyer, Francis Daniel Pastorius, son of Judge Pastorius, of Windsheim, who, at the age of seventeen, entered the University of Altorf. He studied law at Strasburg, Basle, and Jena, and at Ratisbon, the seat of the Imperial Government, obtained a practical knowledge of international polity. Successful in all his examinations and disputations, he received the degree of Doctor of Law at Nuremberg in 1676. In 1679 he was a law-lecturer at Frankfort, where he became deeply interested in the teachings of Dr. Spener. In 1680–81 he travelled in France, England, Ireland, and Italy with his friend Herr Von Rodeck. 'I was,' he says, 'glad to enjoy again the company of my Christian friends, rather than be with Von Rodeck, feasting and dancing.' In 1683, in company with a small number of German Friends, he emigrated to America, settling upon the Frankfort Company's tract between the Schuylkill and the Delaware rivers. The township was divided into four hamlets, namely, Germantown, Krisheim, Crefeld, and Sommerhausen. Soon after his arrival he united himself with the Society of Friends, and became one of its most able and devoted members, as well as the recognized head and lawgiver of the settlement. He married, two years after his arrival, Anneke (Anna), daughter of Dr. Klosterman, of Muhlheim.

In the year 1688 he drew up a memorial against slaveholding, which was adopted by the Germantown Friends and sent up to the Monthly Meeting, and thence to the Yearly Meeting at Philadelphia. It is noteworthy as the first protest made by a religious body against Negro Slavery. The original document was discovered in 1844 by the Philadelphia antiquarian, Nathan Kite, and published in *The Friend* (Vol. XVIII. No. 16). It is a bold and direct appeal to the best instincts of the heart. 'Have not,' he asks, 'these negroes as much right to fight for their freedom as you have to keep them slaves?'

Under the wise direction of Pastorius, the Germantown settlement grew and prospered. The inhabitants planted orchards and vineyards, and surrounded themselves with souvenirs of their old home. A large number of them were linen-weavers, as well as small farmers. The Quakers were the principal sect, but men of all religions were tolerated, and lived together in harmony. In 1692 Richard Frame published, in what he called verse, a *Description of Pennsylvania*, in which he alludes to the settlement:—

'The German town of which I spoke before,
Which is at least in length one mile or more,
Where lives High German people and Low Dutch,
Whose trade in weaving linen cloth is much,—
There grows the flax, as also you may know
That from the same they do divide the tow.
Their trade suits well their habitation,
We find convenience for their occupation.'

Pastorius seems to have been on intimate terms with William Penn, Thomas Lloyd, Chief Justice Logan, Thomas Story, and other leading men in the Province belonging to his own religious society, as also with Kelpius, the learned

Mystic of the Wissahickon, with the pastor of the Swedes' church, and the leaders of the Mennonites. He wrote a description of Pennsylvania, which was published at Frankfort and Leipsic in 1700 and 1701. His *Lives of the Saints*, etc., written in German and dedicated to Professor Schurmberg, his old teacher, was published in 1690. He left behind him many unpublished manuscripts covering a very wide range of subjects, most of which are now lost. One huge manuscript folio, entitled *Hive Beestock, Melliotropheum Alucar, or Rusca Apium*, still remains, containing one thousand pages with about one hundred lines to a page. It is a medley of knowledge and fancy, history, philosophy, and poetry, written in seven languages. A large portion of his poetry is devoted to the pleasures of gardening, the description of flowers, and the care of bees. The following specimen of his punning Latin is addressed to an orchard-pilferer :—

'Quisquis in hæc furtim reptas viridaria nostra
Tangere fallaci poma caveto manu,
Si non obsequeris faxit Deus omne quod opto,
Cum malis nostris ut mala cuncta feras.'

Professor Oswald Seidensticker, to whose papers in *Der Deutsche Pioneer* and that able periodical *The Penn Monthly*, of Philadelphia, I am indebted for many of the foregoing facts in regard to the German pilgrims of the New World, thus closes his notice of Pastorius :—

'No tombstone, not even a record of burial, indicates where his remains have found their last resting-place, and the pardonable desire to associate the homage due to this distinguished man with some visible memento cannot be gratified. There is no reason to suppose that he was interred in any other place than the Friends' old burying-ground in Germantown, though the fact is not attested by any definite source of information. After all, this obliteration of the last trace of his earthly existence is but typical of what has overtaken the times which he represents; *that* Germantown which he founded, which saw him live and move, is at present but a quaint idyl of the past, almost a myth, barely remembered and little cared for by the keener race that has succeeded.'

The Pilgrims of Plymouth have not lacked historian and poet. Justice has been done to their faith, courage, and self-sacrifice, and to the mighty influence of their endeavors to establish righteousness on the earth. The Quaker pilgrims of Pennsylvania, seeking the same object by different means, have not been equally fortunate. The power of their testimony for truth and holiness, peace and freedom, enforced only by what Milton calls 'the unresistible might of meekness,' has been felt through two centuries in the amelioration of penal severities, the abolition of slavery, the reform of the erring, the relief of the poor and suffering,—felt, in brief, in every step of human progress. But of the men themselves, with the single exception of William Penn, scarcely anything is known. Contrasted, from the outset, with the stern, aggressive Puritans of New England, they have come to be regarded as 'a feeble folk,' with a personality as doubtful as their unrecorded graves. They were not soldiers, like Miles Standish; they had no figure so picturesque as Vane, no leader so rashly brave and haughty as Endicott. No Cotton Mather wrote their *Magnalia*; they had no awful drama of supernaturalism in which Satan and his angels were actors; and the only witch mentioned in their simple annals was a poor old Swedish woman, who, on complaint of her countrywomen, was tried and acquitted of everything but imbecility and folly. Nothing but commonplace offices of civility came to pass between them and the Indians; indeed, their enemies taunted them with the fact that the savages did not regard them as Christians, but just such men as themselves. Yet it must be apparent to every careful observer of the progress of American civilization that its two principal currents had their sources in the entirely opposite directions of the Puritan and Quaker colonies. To use the words of a late writer:[1] 'The historical forces, with which no others may be compared in their influence on the people, have been those of the Puritan and the Quaker. The strength of the one was in the confession of an invisible Presence, a righteous, eternal Will, which would establish righteousness on earth; and thence arose the conviction of a direct personal responsibility, which could be tempted by no external splendor and could be shaken by no internal agitation, and could not be evaded or transferred. The strength of the other was the witness in the human spirit to an eternal Word, an Inner Voice which spoke to each alone, while yet it spoke to every man; a Light which each was to follow, and which yet was the light of the world; and all other voices were silent before this, and the solitary path whither it led was more sacred than the worn ways of cathedral-aisles.'

It will be sufficiently apparent to the reader that, in the poem which follows, I have attempted nothing beyond a study of the life and times of the Pennsylvania colonist,—a simple picture of

[1] Mulford's *The Nation*, pp. 267, 268.

a noteworthy man and his locality. The colors of my sketch are all very sober, toned down to the quiet and dreamy atmosphere through which its subject is visible. Whether, in the glare and tumult of the present time, such a picture will find favor may well be questioned. I only know that it has beguiled for me some hours of weariness, and that, whatever may be its measure of public appreciation, it has been to me its own reward.

J. G. W.

AMESBURY, *5th mo.*, 1872.

HAIL to posterity!
Hail, future men of Germanopolis!
Let the young generations yet to be
Look kindly upon this.
Think how your fathers left their native land,—
Dear German-land! O sacred hearths and homes!—
And, where the wild beast roams,
In patience planned
New forest-homes beyond the mighty sea,
There undisturbed and free
To live as brothers of one family.
What pains and cares befell,
What trials and what fears,
Remember, and wherein we have done well
Follow our footsteps, men of coming years!
Where we have failed to do
Aright, or wisely live,
Be warned by us, the better way pursue.
And, knowing we were human, even as you,
Pity us and forgive!
Farewell, Posterity!
Farewell, dear Germany!
Forevermore farewell!

From the Latin of FRANCIS DANIEL PASTORIUS *in the Germantown Records.* 1688.

PRELUDE.

I SING the Pilgrim of a softer clime
And milder speech than those brave men's who brought
To the ice and iron of our winter time
A will as firm, a creed as stern, and wrought
With one mailed hand, and with the other fought.
Simply, as fits my theme, in homely rhyme
I sing the blue-eyed German Spener taught,
Through whose veiled, mystic faith the Inward Light,
Steady and still, an easy brightness, shone,
Transfiguring all things in its radiance white.
The garland which his meekness never sought
I bring him; over fields of harvest sown
With seeds of blessing, now to ripeness grown,
I bid the sower pass before the reapers' sight.

Never in tenderer quiet lapsed the day
From Pennsylvania's vales of spring away,
Where, forest-walled, the scattered hamlets lay
Along the wedded rivers. One long bar
Of purple cloud, on which the evening star
Shone like a jewel on a scimitar,
Held the sky's golden gateway. Through the deep
Hush of the woods a murmur seemed to creep,
The Schuylkill whispering in a voice of sleep.
All else was still. The oxen from their ploughs
Rested at last, and from their long day's browse
Came the dun files of Krisheim's home-bound cows.
And the young city, round whose virgin zone
The rivers like two mighty arms were thrown,
Marked by the smoke of evening fires alone,

Lay in the distance, lovely even then
With its fair women and its stately men
Gracing the forest court of William Penn,

Urban yet sylvan; in its rough-hewn frames
Of oak and pine the dryads held their claims,
And lent its streets their pleasant woodland names.

Anna Pastorius down the leafy lane
Looked city-ward, then stooped to prune again
Her vines and simples, with a sigh of pain.

For fast the streaks of ruddy sunset paled
In the oak clearing, and, as daylight failed,
Slow, overhead, the dusky night-birds sailed.

Again she looked: between green walls of shade,
With low-bent head as if with sorrow weighed,
Daniel Pastorius slowly came and said,

'God's peace be with thee, Anna!' Then he stood
Silent before her, wrestling with the mood
Of one who sees the evil and not good.

'What is it, my Pastorius?' As she spoke,
A slow, faint smile across his features broke,
Sadder than tears. 'Dear heart,' he said, 'our folk

'Are even as others. Yea, our goodliest Friends
Are frail; our elders have their selfish ends,
And few dare trust the Lord to make amends

'For duty's loss. So even our feeble word
For the dumb slaves the startled meeting heard
As if a stone its quiet waters stirred;

'And, as the clerk ceased reading, there began
A ripple of dissent which downward ran
In widening circles, as from man to man.

'Somewhat was said of running before sent,
Of tender fear that some their guide outwent,
Troublers of Israel. I was scarce intent

'On hearing, for behind the reverend row
Of gallery Friends, in dumb and piteous show,
I saw, methought, dark faces full of woe.

'And, in the spirit, I was taken where
They toiled and suffered; I was made aware
Of shame and wrath and anguish and despair!

'And while the meeting smothered our poor plea
With cautious phrase, a Voice there seemed to be,
"As ye have done to these ye do to Me!"

'So it all passed; and the old tithe went on
Of anise, mint, and cumin, till the sun
Set, leaving still the weightier work undone.

'Help, for the good man faileth! Who is strong,
If these be weak? Who shall rebuke the wrong,
If these consent? How long, O Lord! how long!'

He ceased; and, bound in spirit with the bound,
With folded arms, and eyes that sought the ground,
Walked musingly his little garden round.

About him, beaded with the falling dew,
Rare plants of power and herbs of healing grew,
Such as Van Helmont and Agrippa knew.

For, by the lore of Gorlitz' gentle sage,
With the mild mystics of his dreamy age
He read the herbal signs of nature's page,

As once he heard in sweet Von Merlau's bowers[19]
Fair as herself, in boyhood's happy hours,
The pious Spener read his creed in flowers.

'The dear Lord give us patience!' said his wife,
Touching with finger-tip an aloe, rife
With leaves sharp-pointed like an Aztec knife

Or Carib spear, a gift to William Penn
From the rare gardens of John Evelyn,
Brought from the Spanish Main by merchantmen.

'See this strange plant its steady purpose hold,
And, year by year, its patient leaves unfold,
Till the young eyes that watched it first are old.

'But some time, thou hast told me, there shall come
A sudden beauty, brightness, and perfume;
The century-moulded bud shall burst in bloom.

'So may the seed which hath been sown to-day
Grow with the years, and, after long delay,
Break into bloom, and God's eternal Yea

'Answer at last the patient prayers of them
Who now, by faith alone, behold its stem
Crowned with the flowers of Freedom's diadem.

'Meanwhile, to feel and suffer, work and wait,
Remains for us. The wrong indeed is great,
But love and patience conquer soon or late.'

'Well hast thou said, my Anna!' Tenderer
Than youth's caress upon the head of her
Pastorius laid his hand. 'Shall we demur

'Because the vision tarrieth? In an hour
We dream not of, the slow-grown bud may flower,
And what was sown in weakness rise in power!'

Then through the vine-draped door whose legend read,
'Procul este profani!' Anna led
To where their child upon his little bed

Looked up and smiled. 'Dear heart,' she said, 'if we
Must bearers of a heavy burden be,
Our boy, God willing, yet the day shall see

'When from the gallery to the farthest seat,
Slave and slave-owner shall no longer meet,
But all sit equal at the Master's feet.'

On the stone hearth the blazing walnut block
Set the low walls a-glimmer, showed the cock
Rebuking Peter on the Van Wyck clock,

Shone on old tomes of law and physic, side
By side with Fox and Behmen, played at hide
And seek with Anna, midst her household pride

Of flaxen webs, and on the table, bare
Of costly cloth or silver cup, but where,
Tasting the fat shads of the Delaware,

The courtly Penn had praised the good-wife's cheer,
And quoted Horace o'er her home-brewed beer,
Till even grave Pastorius smiled to hear.

In such a home, beside the Schuylkill's wave,
He dwelt in peace with God and man, and gave
Food to the poor and shelter to the slave.

For all too soon the New World's scandal shamed
The righteous code by Penn and Sidney framed,
And men withheld the human rights they claimed.

And slowly wealth and station sanction lent,
And hardened avarice, on its gains intent,
Stifled the inward whisper of dissent.

Yet all the while the burden rested sore
On tender hearts. At last Pastorius bore
Their warning message to the Church's door

In God's name; and the leaven of the word
Wrought ever after in the souls who heard,
And a dead conscience in its grave-clothes stirred

To troubled life, and urged the vain excuse
Of Hebrew custom, patriarchal use,
Good in itself if evil in abuse.

Gravely Pastorius listened, not the less
Discerning through the decent fig-leaf dress
Of the poor plea its shame of selfishness.

One Scripture rule, at least, was unforgot;
He hid the outcast, and bewrayed him not;
And, when his prey the human hunter sought,

He scrupled not, while Anna's wise delay
And proffered cheer prolonged the master's stay,
To speed the black guest safely on his way.

Yet, who shall guess his bitter grief who lends
His life to some great cause, and finds his friends
Shame or betray it for their private ends?

How felt the Master when his chosen strove
In childish folly for their seats above;
And that fond mother, blinded by her love,

Besought him that her sons, beside his throne,
Might sit on either hand? Amidst his own
A stranger oft, companionless and lone,

God's priest and prophet stands. The martyr's pain
Is not alone from scourge and cell and chain;
Sharper the pang when, shouting in his train,

His weak disciples by their lives deny
The loud hosannas of their daily cry,
And make their echo of his truth a lie.

His forest home no hermit's cell he found,
Guests, motley-minded, drew his hearth around,
And held armed truce upon its neutral ground.

There Indian chiefs with battle-bows unstrung,
Strong, hero-limbed, like those whom Homer sung,
Pastorius fancied, when the world was young,

Came with their tawny women, lithe and tall,
Like bronzes in his friend Von Rodeck's hall,
Comely, if black, and not unpleasing all.

There hungry folk in homespun drab and gray
Drew round his board on Monthly Meeting day,
Genial, half merry in their friendly way,

Or, haply, pilgrims from the Fatherland,
Weak, timid, homesick, slow to understand
The New World's promise, sought his helping hand.

Or painful Kelpius[20] from his hermit den
By Wissahickon, maddest of good men,
Dreamed o'er the Chiliast dreams of Petersen.

Deep in the woods, where the small river slid
Snake-like in shade, the Helmstadt Mystic hid,
Weird as a wizard, over arts forbid,

Reading the books of Daniel and of John,
And Behmen's Morning-Redness, through the Stone
Of Wisdom, vouchsafed to his eyes alone,

Whereby he read what man ne'er read before,
And saw the visions man shall see no more,
Till the great angel, striding sea and shore,

Shall bid all flesh await, on land or ships,
The warning trump of the Apocalypse,
Shattering the heavens before the dread eclipse.

Or meek-eyed Mennonist his bearded chin
Leaned o'er the gate; or Ranter, pure within,
Aired his perfection in a world of sin.

Or, talking of old home scenes, Op der Graaf
Teased the low back-log with his shodden staff,
Till the red embers broke into a laugh

And dance of flame, as if they fain would cheer
The rugged face, half tender, half austere,
Touched with the pathos of a homesick tear!

Or Sluyter,[21] saintly familist, whose word
As law the Brethren of the Manor heard,
Announced the speedy terrors of the Lord.

And turned, like Lot at Sodom, from his race,
Above a wrecked world with complacent face
Riding secure upon his plank of grace!

Haply, from Finland's birchen groves exiled,
Manly in thought, in simple ways a child,
His white hair floating round his visage mild,

The Swedish pastor sought the Quaker's door,
Pleased from his neighbor's lips to hear once more
His long-disused and half-forgotten lore.

For both could baffle Babel's lingual curse,
And speak in Bion's Doric, and rehearse
Cleanthes' hymn or Virgil's sounding verse.

And oft Pastorius and the meek old man
Argued as Quaker and as Lutheran,
Ending in Christian love, as they began.

With lettered Lloyd on pleasant morns he strayed
Where Sommerhausen over vales of shade
Looked miles away, by every flower delayed,

Or song of bird, happy and free with one
Who loved, like him, to let his memory run
Over old fields of learning, and to sun
Himself in Plato's wise philosophies,
And dream with Philo over mysteries
Whereof the dreamer never finds the keys;

To touch all themes of thought, nor weakly stop
For doubt of truth, but let the buckets drop
Deep down and bring the hidden waters up.[22]

For there was freedom in that wakening time
Of tender souls; to differ was not crime;
The varying bells made up the perfect chime.

On lips unlike was laid the altar's coal,
The white, clear light, tradition-colored, stole
Through the stained oriel of each human soul.

Gathered from many sects, the Quaker brought
His old beliefs, adjusting to the thought
That moved his soul the creed his fathers taught.

One faith alone, so broad that all mankind
Within themselves its secret witness find,
The soul's communion with the Eternal Mind,

The Spirit's law, the Inward Rule and Guide,
Scholar and peasant, lord and serf, allied,
The polished Penn and Cromwell's Ironside.

As still in Hemskerck's Quaker Meeting,[23] face
By face in Flemish detail, we may trace
How loose-mouthed boor and fine ancestral grace

Sat in close contrast,—the clipt-headed churl,
Broad market-dame, and simple serving-girl
By skirt of silk and periwig in curl!

For soul touched soul; the spiritual treasure-trove
Made all men equal, none could rise above
Nor sink below that level of God's love.

So, with his rustic neighbors sitting down,
The homespun frock beside the scholar's gown,
Pastorius to the manners of the town

Added the freedom of the woods, and sought
The bookless wisdom by experience taught,
And learned to love his new-found home, while not

Forgetful of the old; the seasons went
Their rounds, and somewhat to his spirit lent
Of their own calm and measureless content.

Glad even to tears, he heard the robin sing
His song of welcome to the Western spring,
And bluebird borrowing from the sky his wing.

And when the miracle of autumn came,
And all the woods with many-colored flame
Of splendor, making summer's greenness tame,

Burned, unconsumed, a voice without a sound
Spake to him from each kindled bush around,
And made the strange, new landscape holy ground!

And when the bitter north-wind, keen and swift,
Swept the white street and piled the door-yard drift,
He exercised, as Friends might say, his gift

Of verse, Dutch, English, Latin, like the hash
Of corn and beans in Indian succotash;
Dull, doubtless, but with here and there a flash

Of wit and fine conceit,—the good man's play
Of quiet fancies, meet to while away
The slow hours measuring off an idle day.

At evening, while his wife put on her look
Of love's endurance, from its niche he took
The written pages of his ponderous book.

And read, in half the languages of man,
His 'Rusca Apium,' which with bees began,
And through the gamut of creation ran.

Or, now and then, the missive of some friend
In gray Altorf or storied Nürnberg penned
Dropped in upon him like a guest to spend

The night beneath his roof-tree. Mystical
The fair Von Merlau spake as waters fall
And voices sound in dreams, and yet withal

Human and sweet, as if each far, low tone,
Over the roses of her gardens blown,
Brought the warm sense of beauty all her own.

Wise Spener questioned what his friend could trace
Of spiritual influx or of saving grace
In the wild natures of the Indian race.

And learned Schurmberg, fain, at times, to look
From Talmud, Koran, Veds, and Pentateuch,
Sought out his pupil in his far-off nook,

To query with him of climatic change,
Of bird, beast, reptile, in his forest range,
Of flowers and fruits and simples new and strange.

And thus the Old and New World reached their hands
Across the water, and the friendly lands
Talked with each other from their severed strands.

Pastorius answered all: while seed and root
Sent from his new home grew to flower and fruit
Along the Rhine and at the Spessart's foot;

And, in return, the flowers his boyhood knew
Smiled at his door, the same in form and hue,
And on his vines the Rhenish clusters grew.

No idler he; whoever else might shirk,
He set his hand to every honest work,—
Farmer and teacher, court and meeting clerk.

Still on the town seal his device is found,
Grapes, flax, and thread-spool on a trefoil ground,
With 'Vinum, Linum et Textrinum' wound.

One house sufficed for gospel and for law,
Where Paul and Grotius, Scripture text and saw,
Assured the good, and held the rest in awe.

Whatever legal maze he wandered through,
He kept the Sermon on the Mount in view,
And justice always into mercy grew.

No whipping-post he needed, stocks, nor jail,
Nor ducking-stool; the orchard-thief grew pale
At his rebuke, the vixen ceased to rail,

The usurer's grasp released the forfeit land;
The slanderer faltered at the witness-stand,
And all men took his counsel for command.

Was it caressing air, the brooding love
Of tenderer skies than German land knew of,
Green calm below, blue quietness above,

Still flow of water, deep repose of wood
That, with a sense of loving Fatherhood
And childlike trust in the Eternal Good,

Softened all hearts, and dulled the edge of hate,
Hushed strife, and taught impatient zeal to wait
The slow assurance of the better state?

Who knows what goadings in their sterner way
O'er jagged ice, relieved by granite gray,
Blew round the men of Massachusetts Bay?

What hate of heresy the east-wind woke?
What hints of pitiless power and terror spoke
In waves that on their iron coast-line broke?

Be it as it may: within the Land of Penn
The sectary yielded to the citizen,
And peaceful dwelt the many-creeded men.

Peace brooded over all. No trumpet stung
The air to madness, and no steeple flung
Alarums down from bells at midnight rung.

The land slept well. The Indian from his face
Washed all his war-paint off, and in the place
Of battle-marches sped the peaceful chase,
Or wrought for wages at the white man's side,—
Giving to kindness what his native pride
And lazy freedom to all else denied.

And well the curious scholar loved the old
Traditions that his swarthy neighbors told
By wigwam-fires when nights were growing cold,
Discerned the fact round which their fancy drew
Its dreams, and held their childish faith more true
To God and man than half the creeds he knew.[24]

The desert blossomed round him; wheat-fields rolled
Beneath the warm wind waves of green and gold;
The planted ear returned its hundred-fold.

Great clusters ripened in a warmer sun
Than that which by the Rhine stream shines upon
The purpling hillsides with low vines o'errun.

About each rustic porch the humming-bird
Tried with light bill, that scarce a petal stirred,
The Old World flowers to virgin soil transferred;
And the first-fruits of pear and apple, bending
The young boughs down, their gold and russet blending,
Made glad his heart, familiar odors lending

To the fresh fragrance of the birch and pine,
Life-everlasting, bay, and eglantine,
And all the subtle scents the woods combine.

Fair First-Day mornings, steeped in summer calm,
Warm, tender, restful, sweet with woodland balm,
Came to him, like some mother-hallowed psalm
To the tired grinder at the noisy wheel
Of labor, winding off from memory's reel
A golden thread of music. With no peal
Of bells to call them to the house of praise,
The scattered settlers through green forest-ways
Walked meeting-ward. In reverent amaze

The Indian trapper saw them, from the dim
Shade of the alders on the rivulet's rim,
Seek the Great Spirit's house to talk with Him.

There, through the gathered stillness multiplied
And made intense by sympathy, outside
The sparrows sang, and the gold-robin cried,
A-swing upon his elm. A faint perfume
Breathed through the open windows of the room
From locust-trees, heavy with clustered bloom.

Thither, perchance, sore-tried confessors came,
Whose fervor jail nor pillory could tame,
Proud of the cropped ears meant to be their shame,

Men who had eaten slavery's bitter bread
In Indian isles; pale women who had bled
Under the hangman's lash, and bravely said

God's message through their prison's iron bars;
And gray old soldier-converts, seamed with scars
From every stricken field of England's wars.

Lowly before the Unseen Presence knelt
Each waiting heart, till haply some one felt
On his moved lips the seal of silence melt.

Or, without spoken words, low breathings stole
Of a diviner life from soul to soul,
Baptizing in one tender thought the whole.

When shaken hands announced the meeting o'er,
The friendly group still lingered at the door,
Greeting, inquiring, sharing all the store

Of weekly tidings. Meanwhile youth and maid
Down the green vistas of the woodland strayed,
Whispered and smiled and oft their feet delayed.

Did the boy's whistle answer back the thrushes?
Did light girl laughter ripple through the bushes,
As brooks make merry over roots and rushes?

Unvexed the sweet air seemed. Without a wound
The ear of silence heard, and every sound
Its place in nature's fine accordance found.

And solemn meeting, summer sky and wood,
Old kindly faces, youth and maidenhood
Seemed, like God's new creation, very good!

And, greeting all with quiet smile and word,
Pastorius went his way. The unscared bird
Sang at his side; scarcely the squirrel stirred

At his hushed footstep on the mossy sod;
And, wheresoe'er the good man looked or trod,
He felt the peace of nature and of God.

His social life wore no ascetic form,
He loved all beauty, without fear of harm,
And in his veins his Teuton blood ran warm.

Strict to himself, of other men no spy,
He made his own no circuit-judge to try
The freer conscience of his neighbors by.

With love rebuking, by his life alone,
Gracious and sweet, the better way was shown,
The joy of one, who, seeking not his own,

And faithful to all scruples, finds at last
The thorns and shards of duty overpast,
And daily life, beyond his hope's forecast,

Pleasant and beautiful with sight and sound,
And flowers upspringing in its narrow round,
And all his days with quiet gladness crowned.

He sang not; but, if sometimes tempted strong,
He hummed what seemed like Altorf's Burschen-song,
His good wife smiled and did not count it wrong.

For well he loved his boyhood's brother band;
His Memory, while he trod the New World's strand,
A double-ganger walked the Fatherland!

If, when on frosty Christmas eves the light
Shone on his quiet hearth, he missed the sight
Of Yule-log, Tree, and Christ-child all in white;

And closed his eyes, and listened to the sweet
Old wait-songs sounding down his native street,
And watched again the dancers' mingling feet;

Yet not the less, when once the vision passed,
He held the plain and sober maxims fast
Of the dear Friends with whom his lot was cast.

Still all attuned to nature's melodies,
He loved the bird's song in his dooryard trees,
And the low hum of home-returning bees;

The blossomed flax, the tulip-trees in bloom
Down the long street, the beauty and perfume
Of apple-boughs, the mingling light and gloom

Of Sommerhausen's woodlands, woven through
With sun-threads; and the music the wind drew,
Mournful and sweet, from leaves it overblew.

And evermore, beneath this outward sense,
And through the common sequence of events,
He felt the guiding hand of Providence

Reach out of space. A Voice spake in his ear,
And lo! all other voices far and near
Died at that whisper, full of meanings clear.

The Light of Life shone round him; one by one
The wandering lights, that all-misleading run,
Went out like candles paling in the sun.

That Light he followed, step by step, where'er
It led, as in the vision of the seer
The wheels moved as the spirit in the clear

And terrible crystal moved, with all their eyes
Watching the living splendor sink or rise,
Its will their will, knowing no otherwise.

Within himself he found the law of right,
He walked by faith and not the letter's sight,
And read his Bible by the Inward Light.

And if sometimes the slaves of form and rule,
Frozen in their creeds like fish in winter's pool,
Tried the large tolerance of his liberal school,

His door was free to men of every name,
He welcomed all the seeking souls who came,
And no man's faith he made a cause of blame.

But best he loved in leisure hours to see
His own dear Friends sit by him knee to knee,
In social converse, genial, frank, and free.

There sometimes silence (it were hard to tell
Who owned it first) upon the circle fell,
Hushed Anna's busy wheel, and laid its spell

On the black boy who grimaced by the hearth,
To solemnize his shining face of mirth;
Only the old clock ticked amidst the dearth

Of sound; nor eye was raised nor hand was stirred
In that soul-sabbath, till at last some word
Of tender counsel or low prayer was heard.

Then guests, who lingered but farewell to say
And take love's message, went their homeward way;
So passed in peace the guileless Quaker's day.

His was the Christian's unsung Age of Gold,
A truer idyl than the bards have told
Of Arno's banks or Arcady of old.

Where still the Friends their place of burial keep,
And century-rooted mosses o'er it creep,
The Nürnberg scholar and his helpmeet sleep.

And Anna's aloe? If it flowered at last
In Bartram's garden, did John Woolman cast
A glance upon it as he meekly passed?

And did a secret sympathy possess
That tender soul, and for the slave's redress
Lend hope, strength, patience? It were vain to guess.

Nay, were the plant itself but mythical,
Set in the fresco of tradition's wall
Like Jotham's bramble, mattereth not at all.

Enough to know that, through the winter's frost
And summer's heat, no seed of truth is lost,
And every duty pays at last its cost.

For, ere Pastorius left the sun and air,
God sent the answer to his life-long prayer;
The child was born beside the Delaware,

Who, in the power a holy purpose lends,
Guided his people unto nobler ends,
And left them worthier of the name of Friends.

And lo! the fulness of the time has come,
And over all the exile's Western home,
From sea to sea the flowers of freedom bloom!

And joy-bells ring, and silver trumpets blow;
But not for thee, Pastorius! Even so
The world forgets, but the wise angels know.

KING VOLMER AND ELSIE.

AFTER THE DANISH OF CHRISTIAN WINTER.

[A Danish gentleman, Mr. P. Taft, sent the poet an unrhymed outline in English of Winter's ballad.]

Where, over heathen doom-rings and gray stones of the Horg,
In its little Christian city stands the church of Vordingborg,
In merry mood King Volmer sat, forgetful of his power,
As idle as the Goose of Gold that brooded on his tower.

Out spake the King to Henrik, his young and faithful squire:
'Dar'st trust thy little Elsie, the maid of thy desire?'
'Of all the men in Denmark she loveth only me:
As true to me is Elsie as thy Lily is to thee.'

Loud laughed the king: 'To-morrow shall bring another day,[25]
When I myself will test her; she will not say me nay.'
Thereat the lords and gallants, that round about him stood,
Wagged all their heads in concert and smiled as courtiers should.

The gray lark sings o'er Vordingborg, and on the ancient town
From the tall tower of Valdemar the Golden Goose looks down;
The yellow grain is waving in the pleasant wind of morn,
The wood resounds with cry of hounds and blare of hunter's horn.

In the garden of her father little Elsie sits and spins,
And, singing with the early birds, her daily task begins.
Gay tulips bloom and sweet mint curls around her garden-bower,
But she is sweeter than the mint and fairer than the flower.

About her form her kirtle blue clings lovingly, and, white
As snow, her loose sleeves only leave her small, round wrists in sight;
Below, the modest petticoat can only half conceal
The motion of the lightest foot that ever turned a wheel.

The cat sits purring at her side, bees hum in sunshine warm;
But, look! she starts, she lifts her face, she shades it with her arm.
And, hark! a train of horsemen, with sound of dog and horn,
Come leaping o'er the ditches, come trampling down the corn!

Merrily rang the bridle-reins, and scarf and plume streamed gay,
As fast beside her father's gate the riders held their way;
And one was brave in scarlet cloak, with golden spur on heel,
And, as he checked his foaming steed, the maiden checked her wheel.

'All hail among thy roses, the fairest rose to me!
For weary months in secret my heart has longed for thee!'
What noble knight was this? What words for modest maiden's ear?
She dropped a lowly courtesy of bashfulness and fear.

She lifted up her spinning-wheel; she fain would seek the door,
Trembling in every limb, her cheek with blushes crimsoned o'er.
'Nay, fear me not,' the rider said, 'I offer heart and hand,
Bear witness these good Danish knights who round about me stand.

'I grant you time to think of this, to answer as you may,
For to-morrow, little Elsie, shall bring another day.'
He spake the old phrase slyly, as glancing round his train,
He saw his merry followers seek to hide their smiles in vain.

'The snow of pearls I'll scatter in your curls of golden hair,
I'll line with furs the velvet of the kirtle that you wear;
All precious gems shall twine your neck; and in a chariot gay
You shall ride, my little Elsie, behind four steeds of gray.

'And harps shall sound, and flutes shall play, and brazen lamps shall glow;
On marble floors your feet shall weave the dances to and fro.
At frosty eventide for us the blazing hearth shall shine,
While at our ease we play at draughts, and drink the blood-red wine.'

Then Elsie raised her head and met her wooer face to face;
A roguish smile shone in her eye and on her lip found place.
Back from her low white forehead the curls of gold she threw,
And lifted up her eyes to his, steady and clear and blue.

'I am a lowly peasant, and you a gallant knight;
I will not trust a love that soon may cool and turn to slight.
If you would wed me henceforth be a peasant, not a lord;
I bid you hang upon the wall your tried and trusty sword.'

'To please you, Elsie, I will lay keen Dynadel away,
And in its place will swing the scythe and mow your father's hay.'
'Nay, but your gallant scarlet cloak my eyes can never bear;
A Vadmal coat, so plain and gray, is all that you must wear.'

'Well, Vadmal will I wear for you,' the rider gayly spoke,
'And on the Lord's high altar I'll lay my scarlet cloak.'
'But mark,' she said, 'no stately horse my peasant love must ride,
A yoke of steers before the plough is all that he must guide.'

The knight looked down upon his steed:
'Well, let him wander free:
No other man must ride the horse that
has been backed by me.
Henceforth I 'll tread the furrow and to
my oxen talk,
If only little Elsie beside my plough will
walk.'

'You must take from out your cellar cask
of wine and flask and can;
The homely mead I brew you may serve
a peasant-man.'
'Most willingly, fair Elsie, I 'll drink that
mead of thine,
And leave my minstrel's thirsty throat to
drain my generous wine.'

'Now break your shield asunder, and
shatter sign and boss,
Unmeet for peasant-wedded arms, your
knightly knee across.
And pull me down your castle from top
to basement wall,
And let your plough trace furrows in the
ruins of your hall!'

Then smiled he with a lofty pride; right
well at last he knew
The maiden of the spinning-wheel was to
her troth-plight true.
'Ah, roguish little Elsie! you act your
part full well:
You know that I must bear my shield
and in my castle dwell!

'The lions ramping on that shield between
the hearts aflame
Keep watch o'er Denmark's honor, and
guard her ancient name.
For know that I am Volmer; I dwell in
yonder towers,
Who ploughs them ploughs up Denmark,
this goodly home of ours!

'I tempt no more, fair Elsie! your heart
I know is true;
Would God that all our maidens were
good and pure as you!
Well have you pleased your monarch,
and he shall well repay;
God's peace! Farewell! To-morrow will
bring another day!'

He lifted up his bridle hand, he spurred
his good steed then,
And like a whirl-blast swept away with
all his gallant men.
The steel hoofs beat the rocky path; again
on winds of morn
The wood resounds with cry of hounds
and blare of hunter's horn.

'Thou true and ever faithful!' the listening
Henrik cried;
And, leaping o'er the green hedge, he
stood by Elsie's side.
None saw the fond embracing, save, shining from afar,
The Golden Goose that watched them
from the tower of Valdemar.

O darling girls of Denmark! of all the
flowers that throng
Her vales of spring the fairest, I sing for
you my song.
No praise as yours so bravely rewards
the singer's skill;
Thank God! of maids like Elsie the land
has plenty still!

1872.

THE THREE BELLS.

BENEATH the low-hung night cloud
That raked her splintering mast
The good ship settled slowly,
The cruel leak gained fast.

Over the awful ocean
Her signal guns pealed out.
Dear God! was that Thy answer
From the horror round about?

A voice came down the wild wind,
'Ho! ship ahoy!' its cry:
'Our stout Three Bells of Glasgow
Shall lay till daylight by!'

Hour after hour crept slowly,
Yet on the heaving swells
Tossed up and down the ship-lights,
The lights of the Three Bells!

And ship to ship made signals,
Man answered back to man,
While oft, to cheer and hearten,
The Three Bells nearer ran;

And the captain from her taffrail
Sent down his hopeful cry:
'Take heart! Hold on!' he shouted;
'The Three Bells shall lay by!'

All night across the waters
The tossing lights shone clear;
All night from reeling taffrail
The Three Bells sent her cheer.

And when the dreary watches
Of storm and darkness passed,
Just as the wreck lurched under,
All souls were saved at last.

Sail on, Three Bells, forever,
In grateful memory sail!
Ring on, Three Bells of rescue,
Above the wave and gale!

Type of the Love eternal,
Repeat the Master's cry,
As tossing through our darkness
The lights of God draw nigh!

1872.

JOHN UNDERHILL.

A SCORE of years had come and gone
Since the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth stone,
When Captain Underhill, bearing scars
From Indian ambush and Flemish wars,
Left three-hilled Boston and wandered down,
East by north, to Cocheco town.

With Vane the younger, in counsel sweet,
He had sat at Anna Hutchinson's feet,
And, when the bolt of banishment fell
On the head of his saintly oracle,
He had shared her ill as her good report,
And braved the wrath of the General Court.

He shook from his feet as he rode away
The dust of the Massachusetts Bay.
The world might bless and the world might ban,
What did it matter the perfect man,
To whom the freedom of earth was given,
Proof against sin, and sure of heaven?

He cheered his heart as he rode along
With screed of Scripture and holy song,
Or thought how he rode with his lances free
By the Lower Rhine and the Zuyder-Zee,
Till his wood-path grew to a trodden road,
And Hilton Point in the distance showed.

He saw the church with the block-house nigh,
The two fair rivers, the flakes thereby,
And, tacking to windward, low and crank,
The little shallop from Strawberry Bank;
And he rose in his stirrups and looked abroad
Over land and water, and praised the Lord.

Goodly and stately and grave to see,
Into the clearing's space rode he,
With the sun on the hilt of his sword in sheath,
And his silver buckles and spurs beneath,
And the settlers welcomed him, one and all,
From swift Quampeagan to Gonic Fall.

And he said to the elders: 'Lo, I come
As the way seemed open to seek a home.
Somewhat the Lord hath wrought by my hands
In the Narragansett and Netherlands,
And if here ye have work for a Christian man,
I will tarry, and serve ye as best I can.

'I boast not of gifts, but fain would own
The wonderful favor God hath shown,
The special mercy vouchsafed one day
On the shore of Narragansett Bay,
As I sat, with my pipe, from the camp aside,
And mused like Isaac at eventide.

'A sudden sweetness of peace I found,
A garment of gladness wrapped me round;
I felt from the law of works released,
The strife of the flesh and spirit ceased,
My faith to a full assurance grew,
And all I had hoped for myself I knew.

'Now, as God appointeth, I keep my way,
I shall not stumble, I shall not stray;
He hath taken away my fig-leaf dress,
I wear the robe of His righteousness;
And the shafts of Satan no more avail
Than Pequot arrows on Christian mail.'

'Tarry with us,' the settlers cried,
'Thou man of God, as our ruler and guide.'
And Captain Underhill bowed his head.
'The will of the Lord be done!' he said.
And the morrow beheld him sitting down
In the ruler's seat in Cocheco town.

And he judged therein as a just man should;
His words were wise and his rule was good;
He coveted not his neighbor's land,
From the holding of bribes he shook his hand;
And through the camps of the heathen ran
A wholesome fear of the valiant man.

But the heart is deceitful, the good Book saith,
And life hath ever a savor of death.
Through hymns of triumph the tempter calls,
And whoso thinketh he standeth falls.
Alas! ere their round the seasons ran,
There was grief in the soul of the saintly man.

The tempter's arrows that rarely fail
Had found the joints of his spiritual mail;
And men took note of his gloomy air,
The shame in his eye, the halt in his prayer,
The signs of a battle lost within,
The pain of a soul in the coils of sin.

Then a whisper of scandal linked his name
With broken vows and a life of blame;
And the people looked askance on him
As he walked among them sullen and grim,
Ill at ease, and bitter of word,
And prompt of quarrel with hand or sword.

None knew how, with prayer and fasting still,
He strove in the bonds of his evil will;
But he shook himself like Samson at length,
And girded anew his loins of strength,
And bade the crier go up and down
And call together the wondering town.

Jeer and murmur and shaking of head
Ceased as he rose in his place and said:
'Men, brethren, and fathers, well ye know
How I came among you a year ago,
Strong in the faith that my soul was freed
From sin of feeling, or thought, or deed.

'I have sinned, I own it with grief and shame,
But not with a lie on my lips I came.
In my blindness I verily thought my heart
Swept and garnished in every part.
He chargeth His angels with folly; He sees
The heavens unclean. Was I more than these?

'I urge no plea. At your feet I lay
The trust you gave me, and go my way.
Hate me or pity me, as you will,
The Lord will have mercy on sinners still;
And I, who am chiefest, say to all,
Watch and pray, lest ye also fall.'

No voice made answer: a sob so low
That only his quickened ear could know
Smote his heart with a bitter pain,
As into the forest he rode again,
And the veil of its oaken leaves shut down
On his latest glimpse of Cocheco town.

Crystal-clear on the man of sin
The streams flashed up, and the sky shone in;
On his cheek of fever the cool wind blew,
The leaves dropped on him their tears of dew,
And angels of God, in the pure, sweet guise
Of flowers, looked on him with sad surprise.

Was his ear at fault that brook and breeze
Sang in their saddest of minor keys?
What was it the mournful wood-thrush said?
What whispered the pine-trees overhead?
Did he hear the Voice on his lonely way
That Adam heard in the cool of day?

Into the desert alone rode he,
Alone with the Infinite Purity;
And, bowing his soul to its tender rebuke,
As Peter did to the Master's look,
He measured his path with prayers of pain
For peace with God and nature again.

And in after years to Cocheco came
The bruit of a once familiar name;
How among the Dutch of New Netherlands,
From wild Danskamer to Haarlem sands,
A penitent soldier preached the Word,
And smote the heathen with Gideon's sword!

And the heart of Boston was glad to hear
How he harried the foe on the long frontier,
And heaped on the land against him barred
The coals of his generous watch and ward.
Frailest and bravest! the Bay State still
Counts with her worthies John Underhill.

1873.

CONDUCTOR BRADLEY.

A railway conductor who lost his life in an accident on a Connecticut railway, May 9, 1878.

Conductor Bradley, (always may his name
Be said with reverence!) as the swift doom came,
Smitten to death, a crushed and mangled frame,

Sank, with the brake he grasped just where he stood
To do the utmost that a brave man could,
And die, if needful, as a true man should.

Men stooped above him; women dropped their tears
On that poor wreck beyond all hopes or fears,
Lost in the strength and glory of his years.

What heard they? Lo! the ghastly lips of pain,
Dead to all thought save duty's, moved again:
'Put out the signals for the other train!'

No nobler utterance since the world began
From lips of saint or martyr ever ran,
Electric, through the sympathies of man.

Ah me! how poor and noteless seem to this
The sick-bed dramas of self-consciousness,
Our sensual fears of pain and hopes of bliss!

Oh, grand, supreme endeavor! Not in vain
That last brave act of failing tongue and brain!
Freighted with life the downward rushing train,

Following the wrecked one, as wave follows wave,
Obeyed the warning which the dead lips gave.
Others he saved, himself he could not save.

Nay, the lost life *was* saved. He is not dead
Who in his record still the earth shall tread
With God's clear aureole shining round his head.

We bow as in the dust, with all our pride
Of virtue dwarfed the noble deed beside.
God give us grace to live as Bradley died!

1873.

THE WITCH OF WENHAM.

The house is still standing in Danvers, Mass., where, it is said, a suspected witch was confined overnight in the attic, which was bolted fast. In the morning, when the constable came to take her to Salem for trial, she was missing, although the door was still bolted. Her escape was doubtless aided by her friends, but at the time it was attributed to Satanic interference.[26]

I.

Along Crane River's sunny slopes
Blew warm the winds of May,
And over Naumkeag's ancient oaks
The green outgrew the gray.

The grass was green on Rial-side,
The early birds at will
Waked up the violet in its dell,
The wind-flower on its hill.

'Where go you, in your Sunday coat,
Son Andrew, tell me, pray.'
'For striped perch in Wenham Lake
I go to fish to-day.'

'Unharmed of thee in Wenham Lake
The mottled perch shall be:
A blue-eyed witch sits on the bank
And weaves her net for thee.

'She weaves her golden hair; she sings
Her spell-song low and faint;
The wickedest witch in Salem jail
Is to that girl a saint.'

'Nay, mother, hold thy cruel tongue;
God knows,' the young man cried,
'He never made a whiter soul
Than hers by Wenham side.

'She tends her mother sick and blind,
And every want supplies;
To her above the blessed Book
She lends her soft blue eyes.

'Her voice is glad with holy songs,
Her lips are sweet with prayer;
Go where you will, in ten miles round
Is none more good and fair.'

'Son Andrew, for the love of God
And of thy mother, stay!'
She clasped her hands, she wept aloud,
But Andrew rode away.

'O reverend sir, my Andrew's soul
The Wenham witch has caught;
She holds him with the curlëd gold
Whereof her snare is wrought.

'She charms him with her great blue eyes,
She binds him with her hair;
Oh, break the spell with holy words,
Unbind him with a prayer!'

'Take heart,' the painful preacher said,
'This mischief shall not be;
The witch shall perish in her sins
And Andrew shall go free.

'Our poor Ann Putnam testifies
She saw her weave a spell,
Bare-armed, loose-haired, at full of moon,
Around a dried-up well.

'"Spring up, O well!" she softly sang
The Hebrew's old refrain
(For Satan uses Bible words),
Till water flowed amain.

'And many a goodwife heard her speak
By Wenham water words
That made the buttercups take wings
And turn to yellow birds.

'They say that swarming wild bees seek
The hive at her command;
And fishes swim to take their food
From out her dainty hand.

'Meek as she sits in meeting-time,
The godly minister
Notes well the spell that doth compel
The young men's eyes to her.

'The mole upon her dimpled chin
Is Satan's seal and sign;
Her lips are red with evil bread
And stain of unblest wine.

'For Tituba, my Indian, saith
At Quasycung she took
The Black Man's godless sacrament
And signed his dreadful book.

'Last night my sore-afflicted child
Against the young witch cried.
To take her Marshal Herrick rides
Even now to Wenham side.'

The marshal in his saddle sat,
His daughter at his knee;
'I go to fetch that arrant witch,
Thy fair playmate,' quoth he.

'Her spectre walks the parsonage,
And haunts both hall and stair;
They know her by the great blue eyes
And floating gold of hair.'

'They lie, they lie, my father dear!
No foul old witch is she,
But sweet and good and crystal-pure
As Wenham waters be.'

'I tell, thee, child, the Lord hath set
Before us good and ill,
And woe to all whose carnal loves
Oppose His righteous will.

'Between Him and the powers of hell
Choose thou, my child, to-day:
No sparing hand, no pitying eye,
When God commands to slay!'

He went his way; the old wives shook
With fear as he drew nigh;
The children in the dooryards held
Their breath as he passed by.

Too well they knew the gaunt gray horse
The grim witch-hunter rode,
The pale Apocalyptic beast
By grisly Death bestrode.

II.

Oh, fair the face of Wenham Lake
Upon the young girl's shone,
Her tender mouth, her dreaming eyes,
Her yellow hair outblown.

By happy youth and love attuned
To natural harmonies,
The singing birds, the whispering wind,
She sat beneath the trees.

Sat shaping for her bridal dress
Her mother's wedding gown,
When lo! the marshal, writ in hand,
From Alford hill rode down.

His face was hard with cruel fear,
He grasped the maiden's hands:
'Come with me unto Salem town,
For so the law commands!'

'Oh, let me to my mother say
Farewell before I go!'
He closer tied her little hands
Unto his saddle bow.

'Unhand me,' cried she piteously,
'For thy sweet daughter's sake.'
'I'll keep my daughter safe,' he said,
'From the witch of Wenham Lake.'

'Oh, leave me for my mother's sake,
She needs my eyes to see.'
'Those eyes, young witch, the crows shall peck
From off the gallows-tree.'

He bore her to a farm-house old,
And up its stairway long,
And closed on her the garret-door
With iron bolted strong.

The day died out, the night came down:
Her evening prayer she said,
While, through the dark, strange faces seemed
To mock her as she prayed.

The present horror deepened all
The fears her childhood knew;
The awe wherewith the air was filled
With every breath she drew.

And could it be, she trembling asked,
Some secret thought or sin
Had shut good angels from her heart
And let the bad ones in?

Had she in some forgotten dream
Let go her hold on Heaven,
And sold herself unwittingly
To spirits unforgiven?

Oh, weird and still the dark hours passed;
No human sound she heard,
But up and down the chimney stack
The swallows moaned and stirred.

And o'er her, with a dread surmise
Of evil sight and sound,
The blind bats on their leathern wings
Went wheeling round and round.

Low hanging in the midnight sky
Looked in a half-faced moon.
Was it a dream, or did she hear
Her lover's whistled tune?

She forced the oaken scuttle back;
A whisper reached her ear:
'Slide down the roof to me,' it said,
'So softly none may hear.'

She slid along the sloping roof
Till from its eaves she hung,
And felt the loosened shingles yield
To which her fingers clung.

Below, her lover stretched his hands
And touched her feet so small;
'Drop down to me, dear heart,' he said,
'My arms shall break the fall.'

He set her on his pillion soft,
Her arms about him twined;
And, noiseless as if velvet-shod,
They left the house behind.

But when they reached the open way,
Full free the rein he cast;
Oh, never through the mirk midnight
Rode man and maid more fast.

Along the wild wood-paths they sped,
The bridgeless streams they swam;
At set of moon they passed the Bass,
At sunrise Agawam.

At high noon on the Merrimac
The ancient ferryman
Forgot, at times, his idle oars,
So fair a freight to scan.

And when from off his grounded boat
He saw them mount and ride,
'God keep her from the evil eye,
And harm of witch!' he cried.

The maiden laughed, as youth will laugh
At all its fears gone by;
'He does not know,' she whispered low,
'A little witch am I.'

All day he urged his weary horse,
And, in the red sundown,
Drew rein before a friendly door
In distant Berwick town.

A fellow-feeling for the wronged
The Quaker people felt;
And safe beside their kindly hearths
The hunted maiden dwelt,

Until from off its breast the land
The haunting horror threw,
And hatred, born of ghastly dreams,
To shame and pity grew.

Sad were the year's spring morns, and sad
Its golden summer day,
But blithe and glad its withered fields,
And skies of ashen gray;

For spell and charm had power no more,
The spectres ceased to roam,
And scattered households knelt again
Around the hearths of home.

And when once more by Beaver Dam
The meadow-lark outsang,
And once again on all the hills
The early violets sprang,

And all the windy pasture slopes
Lay green within the arms
Of creeks that bore the salted sea
To pleasant inland farms,

The smith filed off the chains he forged,
The jail-bolts backward fell;
And youth and hoary age came forth
Like souls escaped from hell.

1877.

KING SOLOMON AND THE ANTS.

Out from Jerusalem
The king rode with his great
War chiefs and lords of state,
And Sheba's queen with them;

Comely, but black withal,
To whom, perchance, belongs
That wondrous Song of songs,
Sensuous and mystical,

Whereto devout souls turn
In fond, ecstatic dream,
And through its earth-born theme
The Love of loves discern.

Proud in the Syrian sun,
In gold and purple sheen,
The dusky Ethiop queen
Smiled on King Solomon.

Wisest of men, he knew
The languages of all
The creatures great or small
That trod the earth or flew.

Across an ant-hill led
The king's path, and he heard
Its small folk, and their word
He thus interpreted:

'Here comes the king men greet
As wise and good and just,
To crush us in the dust
Under his heedless feet.'

The great king bowed his head,
And saw the wide surprise
Of the Queen of Sheba's eyes
As he told her what they said.

'O king!' she whispered sweet,
'Too happy fate have they
Who perish in thy way
Beneath thy gracious feet!

'Thou of the God-lent crown,
Shall these vile creatures dare
Murmur against thee where
The knees of kings kneel down?'

'Nay,' Solomon replied,
'The wise and strong should seek
The welfare of the weak,'
And turned his horse aside.

His train, with quick alarm,
Curved with their leader round
The ant-hill's peopled mound,
And left it free from harm.

The jewelled head bent low;
'O king!' she said, 'henceforth
The secret of thy worth
And wisdom well I know.

'Happy must be the State
Whose ruler heedeth more
The murmurs of the poor
Than flatteries of the great.'

1877.

IN THE 'OLD SOUTH.'

On the 8th of July, 1677, Margaret Brewster with four other Friends went into the South Church in time of meeting, 'in sackcloth, with ashes upon her head, barefoot, and her face blackened,' and delivered 'a warning from the great God of Heaven and Earth to the Rulers and Magistrates of Boston.' For the offence she was sentenced to be 'whipped at a cart's tail up and down the Town, with twenty lashes.'

She came and stood in the Old South Church,
A wonder and a sign,
With a look the old-time sibyls wore,
Half-crazed and half-divine.

Save the mournful sackcloth about her wound,
Unclothed as the primal mother,
With limbs that trembled and eyes that blazed
With a fire she dare not smother.

Loose on her shoulders fell her hair,
With sprinkled ashes gray;
She stood in the broad aisle strange and weird
As a soul at the judgment day.

And the minister paused in his sermon's midst,
And the people held their breath,
For these were the words the maiden spoke
Through lips as the lips of death:

'Thus saith the Lord, with equal feet
All men My courts shall tread,
And priest and ruler no more shall eat
My people up like bread!

'Repent! repent! ere the Lord shall speak
In thunder and breaking seals!
Let all souls worship Him in the way
His light within reveals.'

She shook the dust from her naked feet,
And her sackcloth closer drew,
And into the porch of the awe-hushed church
She passed like a ghost from view.

They whipped her away at the tail o' the cart
Through half the streets of the town,
But the words she uttered that day nor fire
Could burn nor water drown.

And now the aisles of the ancient church
By equal feet are trod,
And the bell that swings in its belfry rings
Freedom to worship God!

And now whenever a wrong is done
It thrills the conscious walls;
The stone from the basement cries aloud
And the beam from the timber calls.

There are steeple-houses on every hand,
And pulpits that bless and ban,
And the Lord will not grudge the single church
That is set apart for man.

For in two commandments are all the law
And the prophets under the sun,
And the first is last and the last is first,
And the twain are verily one.

So long as Boston shall Boston be,
And her bay-tides rise and fall,
Shall freedom stand in the Old South Church
And plead for the rights of all!

1877.

THE HENCHMAN.

[Written at the request of a young lady, who said to the poet: 'Mr. Whittier, you never wrote a love song. I do not believe you can write one. I wish you would try to write one for me to sing.' In sending the poem afterward to the editor of *The Independent*, Whittier wrote: 'I send, in compliance with the wish of Mr. Bowen and thyself, a ballad upon which, though not long, I have bestowed a good deal of labor. It is not exactly a Quakerly piece, nor is it didactic, and it has no moral that I know of. But it is, I think, natural, simple, and not unpoetical.']

My lady walks her morning round,
My lady's page her fleet greyhound,
My lady's hair the fond winds stir,
And all the birds make songs for her.

Her thrushes sing in Rathburn bowers,
And Rathburn side is gay with flowers;
But ne'er like hers, in flower or bird,
Was beauty seen or music heard.

The distance of the stars is hers;
The least of all her worshippers,
The dust beneath her dainty heel,
She knows not that I see or feel.

Oh, proud and calm!—she cannot know
Where'er she goes with her I go;
Oh, cold and fair!—she cannot guess
I kneel to share her hound's caress!

Gay knights beside her hunt and hawk,
I rob their ears of her sweet talk;
Her suitors come from east and west,
I steal her smiles from every guest.

Unheard of her, in loving words,
I greet her with the song of birds;
I reach her with her green-armed bowers,
I kiss her with the lips of flowers.

The hound and I are on her trail,
The wind and I uplift her veil;
As if the calm, cold moon she were,
And I the tide, I follow her.

As unrebuked as they, I share
The license of the sun and air,
And in a common homage hide
My worship from her scorn and pride.

World-wide apart, and yet so near,
I breathe her charmed atmosphere,
Wherein to her my service brings
The reverence due to holy things.

Her maiden pride, her haughty name,
My dumb devotion shall not shame;
The love that no return doth crave
To knightly levels lifts the slave.

No lance have I, in joust or fight,
To splinter in my lady's sight;
But, at her feet, how blest were I
For any need of hers to die!

1877.

THE DEAD FEAST OF THE KOL-FOLK.

E. B. Tylor in his *Primitive Culture*, chapter xii., gives an account of the reverence paid the dead by the Kol tribes of Chota Nagpur, Assam. 'When a Ho or Munda,' he says, 'has been burned on the funeral pile, collected morsels of his bones are carried in procession with a solemn, ghostly, sliding step, keeping time to the deep-sounding drum, and when the old woman who carries the bones on her bamboo tray lowers it from time to time, then girls who carry pitchers and brass vessels mournfully reverse them to show that they are empty; thus the remains are taken to visit every house in the village, and every dwelling of a friend or relative for miles, and the inmates come out to mourn and praise the goodness of the departed; the bones are carried to all the dead man's favorite haunts, to the fields he cultivated, to the grove he planted, to the threshing-floor where he worked, to the village dance-room where he made merry. At last they are taken to the grave, and buried in an earthen vase upon a store of food, covered with one of those huge stone slabs which European visitors wonder at in the districts of the aborigines of India.' In the *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Bengal*, vol. ix., p. 796, is a Ho dirge.

We have opened the door,
Once, twice, thrice!
We have swept the floor,
We have boiled the rice.
Come hither, come hither!
Come from the far lands,
Come from the star lands,
Come as before!
We lived long together,
We loved one another;
Come back to our life.
Come father, come mother,
Come sister and brother,
Child, husband, and wife,
For you we are sighing.
Come take your old places,
Come look in our faces,
The dead on the dying,
Come home!

We have opened the door,
Once, twice, thrice!
We have kindled the coals,
And we boil the rice
For the feast of souls.
Come hither, come hither!
Think not we fear you,
Whose hearts are so near you.
Come tenderly thought on,
Come all unforgotten,
Come from the shadow-lands,
From the dim meadow-lands
Where the pale grasses bend
Low to our sighing.
Come father, come mother,
Come sister and brother,
Come husband and friend,
The dead to the dying,
Come home!

We have opened the door
You entered so oft;
For the feast of souls
We have kindled the coals,
And we boil the rice soft.
Come you who are dearest
To us who are nearest,
Come hither, come hither,
From out the wild weather;
The storm clouds are flying,
The peepul is sighing;
Come in from the rain.
Come father, come mother,
Come sister and brother,
Come husband and lover,
Beneath our roof-cover.
Look on us again,
The dead on the dying,
Come home!

We have opened the door!
For the feast of souls
We have kindled the coals
We may kindle no more!
Snake, fever, and famine,
The curse of the Brahmin,
The sun and the dew,
They burn us, they bite us,
They waste us and smite us;
Our days are but few!

In strange lands far yonder
To wonder and wander
We hasten to you.
List then to our sighing,
While yet we are here:
Nor seeing nor hearing,
We wait without fearing
To feel you draw near.
O dead, to the dying
Come home!

1879.

THE KHAN'S DEVIL.

The Khan came from Bokhara town
To Hamza, santon of renown.

'My head is sick, my hands are weak;
Thy help, O holy man, I seek.'

In silence marking for a space
The Khan's red eyes and purple face,

Thick voice, and loose, uncertain tread,
'Thou hast a devil!' Hamza said.

'Allah forbid!' exclaimed the Khan.
'Rid me of him at once, O man!'

'Nay,' Hamza said, 'no spell of mine
Can slay that cursed thing of thine.

'Leave feast and wine, go forth and drink
Water of healing on the brink

'Where clear and cold from mountain snows,
The Nahr el Zeben downward flows.

'Six moons remain, then come to me;
May Allah's pity go with thee!'

Awestruck, from feast and wine the Khan
Went forth where Nahr el Zeben ran.

Roots were his food, the desert dust
His bed, the water quenched his thirst;

And when the sixth moon's scimitar
Curved sharp above the evening star,

He sought again the santon's door,
Not weak and trembling as before,

But strong of limb and clear of brain;
'Behold,' he said, 'the fiend is slain.'

'Nay,' Hamza answered, 'starved and drowned,
The curst one lies in death-like swound.

'But evil breaks the strongest gyves,
And jins like him have charmed lives.

'One beaker of the juice of grape
May call him up in living shape.

'When the red wine of Badakshan
Sparkles for thee, beware, O Khan!

'With water quench the fire within,
And drown each day thy devilkin!'

Thenceforth the great Khan shunned the cup
As Shitan's own, though offered up,

With laughing eyes and jewelled hands,
By Yarkand's maids and Samarcand's.

And, in the lofty vestibule
Of the medress of Kaush Kodul,

The students of the holy law
A golden-lettered tablet saw,

With these words, by a cunning hand,
Graved on it at the Khan's command:

'In Allah's name, to him who hath
A devil, Khan el Hamed saith,

'Wisely our Prophet cursed the vine:
The fiend that loves the breath of wine

'No prayer can slay, no marabout
Nor Meccan dervis can drive out.

'I, Khan el Hamed, know the charm
That robs him of his power to harm.

'Drown him, O Islam's child! the spell
To save thee lies in tank and well!'

1879.

THE KING'S MISSIVE.

1661.

This ballad, originally written for *The Memorial History of Boston*, describes, with pardonable poetic license, a memorable incident in the annals of the city. The interview between Shattuck and the Governor took place, I have since learned, in the residence of the latter, and not in the Council Chamber. The publication of the ballad led to some discussion as to the historical truthfulness of the picture, but I have seen no reason to rub out any of the figures or alter the lines and colors.

UNDER the great hill sloping bare
To cove and meadow and Common lot,
In his council chamber and oaken chair,
Sat the worshipful Governor Endicott.
A grave, strong man, who knew no peer
In the pilgrim land, where he ruled in fear
Of God, not man, and for good or ill
Held his trust with an iron will.

He had shorn with his sword the cross from out
The flag, and cloven the May-pole down,
Harried the heathen round about,
And whipped the Quakers from town to town.
Earnest and honest, a man at need
To burn like a torch for his own harsh creed,
He kept with the flaming brand of his zeal
The gate of the holy common weal.

His brow was clouded, his eye was stern,
With a look of mingled sorrow and wrath;
'Woe's me!' he murmured: 'at every turn
The pestilent Quakers are in my path!
Some we have scourged, and banished some,
Some hanged, more doomed, and still they come,
Fast as the tide of yon bay sets in,
Sowing their heresy's seed of sin.

'Did we count on this? Did we leave behind
The graves of our kin, the comfort and ease
Of our English hearths and homes, to find
Troublers of Israel such as these?
Shall I spare? Shall I pity them? God forbid!
I will do as the prophet to Agag did:
They come to poison the wells of the Word,
I will hew them in pieces before the Lord!'

The door swung open, and Rawson the clerk
Entered, and whispered under breath,
'There waits below for the hangman's work
A fellow banished on pain of death—
Shattuck, of Salem, unhealed of the whip,
Brought over in Master Goldsmith's ship
At anchor here in a Christian port,
With freight of the devil and all his sort!'

Twice and thrice on the chamber floor
Striding fiercely from wall to wall,
'The Lord do so to me and more,'
The Governor cried, 'if I hang not all!
Bring hither the Quaker.' Calm, sedate,
With the look of a man at ease with fate,
Into that presence grim and dread
Came Samuel Shattuck, with hat on head.

'Off with the knave's hat!' An angry hand
Smote down the offence; but the wearer said,
With a quiet smile, 'By the king's command
I bear his message and stand in his stead.'
In the Governor's hand a missive he laid
With the royal arms on its seal displayed,
And the proud man spake as he gazed thereat,
Uncovering, 'Give Mr. Shattuck his hat.'

He turned to the Quaker, bowing low,—
'The king commandeth your friends' release;
Doubt not he shall be obeyed, although
To his subjects' sorrow and sin's increase.
What he here enjoineth, John Endicott,
His loyal servant, questioneth not.
You are free! God grant the spirit you own
May take you from us to parts unknown.'

So the door of the jail was open cast,
And, like Daniel, out of the lion's den
Tender youth and girlhood passed,
With age-bowed women and gray-locked men.
And the voice of one appointed to die
Was lifted in praise and thanks on high,
And the little maid from New Netherlands
Kissed, in her joy, the doomed man's hands.

And one, whose call was to minister
To the souls in prison, beside him went,
An ancient woman, bearing with her
The linen shroud for his burial meant.
For she, not counting her own life dear,
In the strength of a love that cast out fear,
Had watched and served where her brethren died,
Like those who waited the cross beside.

One moment they paused on their way to look
On the martyr graves by the Common side,
And much scourged Wharton of Salem took
His burden of prophecy up and cried:
'Rest, souls of the valiant! Not in vain
Have ye borne the Master's cross of pain;
Ye have fought the fight, ye are victors crowned,
With a fourfold chain ye have Satan bound!'

The autumn haze lay soft and still
On wood and meadow and upland farms;
On the brow of Snow Hill the great windmill
Slowly and lazily swung its arms;
Broad in the sunshine stretched away,
With its capes and islands, the turquoise bay;
And over water and dusk of pines
Blue hills lifted their faint outlines.

The topaz leaves of the walnut glowed,
The sumach added its crimson fleck,
And double in air and water showed
The tinted maples along the Neck;
Through frost flower clusters of pale starmist,
And gentian fringes of amethyst,
And royal plumes of golden-rod,
The grazing cattle on Centry trod.

But as they who see not, the Quakers saw
The world about them; they only thought
With deep thanksgiving and pious awe
On the great deliverance God had wrought.
Through lane and alley the gazing town
Noisily followed them up and down;
Some with scoffing and brutal jeer,
Some with pity and words of cheer.

One brave voice rose above the din.
Upsall, gray with his length of days,
Cried from the door of his Red Lion Inn:
'Men of Boston, give God the praise!
No more shall innocent blood call down
The bolts of wrath on your guilty town.
The freedom of worship, dear to you,
Is dear to all, and to all is due.

'I see the vision of days to come,
When your beautiful City of the Bay
Shall be Christian liberty's chosen home,
And none shall his neighbor's rights gainsay.
The varying notes of worship shall blend
And as one great prayer to God ascend,
And hands of mutual charity raise
Walls of salvation and gates of praise.'

So passed the Quakers through Boston town,
Whose painful ministers sighed to see
The walls of their sheep-fold falling down,
And wolves of heresy prowling free.

But the years went on, and brought no wrong;
With milder counsels the State grew strong,
As outward Letter and inward Light
Kept the balance of truth aright.

The Puritan spirit perishing not,
To Concord's yeomen the signal sent,
And spake in the voice of the cannon-shot
That severed the chains of a continent.
With its gentler mission of peace and good-will
The thought of the Quaker is living still,
And the freedom of soul he prophesied
Is gospel and law where the martyrs died.

1880.

VALUATION.

The old Squire said, as he stood by his gate,
And his neighbor, the Deacon, went by,
'In spite of my bank stock and real estate,
You are better off, Deacon, than I.

'We're both growing old, and the end's drawing near,
You have less of this world to resign,
But in Heaven's appraisal your assets, I fear,
Will reckon up greater than mine.

'They say I am rich, but I'm feeling so poor,
I wish I could swap with you even:
The pounds I have lived for and laid up in store
For the shillings and pence you have given.'

'Well, Squire,' said the Deacon, with shrewd common sense,
While his eye had a twinkle of fun,
'Let your pounds take the way of my shillings and pence,
And the thing can be easily done!'

1880.

RABBI ISHMAEL.

'Rabbi Ishmael Ben Elisha said, Once I entered into the Holy of Hollies [as High Priest] to burn incense, when I saw Aktriel [the Divine Crown] Jah, Lord of Hosts, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, who said unto me, "Ishmael, my son, bless me." I answered, "*May it please Thee to make Thy compassion prevail over Thine anger; may it be revealed above Thy other attributes; mayest Thou deal with Thy children according to it, and not according to the strict measure of judgment.*" It seemed to me that He bowed His head, as though to answer Amen to my blessing.'—*Talmud* (Berachôth, i. f. 6 b).

The Rabbi Ishmael, with the woe and sin
Of the world heavy upon him, entering in
The Holy of Holies, saw an awful Face
With terrible splendor filling all the place.
'O Ishmael Ben Elisha!' said a voice,
'What seekest thou? What blessing is thy choice?'
And, knowing that he stood before the Lord,
Within the shadow of the cherubim,
Wide-winged between the blinding light and him,
He bowed himself, and uttered not a word,
But in the silence of his soul was prayer:
'O Thou Eternal! I am one of all,
And nothing ask that others may not share.
Thou art almighty; we are weak and small,
And yet Thy children: let Thy mercy spare!'
Trembling, he raised his eyes, and in the place
Of the insufferable glory, lo! a face
Of more than mortal tenderness, that bent
Graciously down in token of assent,
And, smiling, vanished. With strange joy elate,
The wondering Rabbi sought the temple's gate.
Radiant as Moses from the Mount, he stood
And cried aloud unto the multitude:

'O Israel, hear! The Lord our God is good!
Mine eyes have seen His glory and His grace;
Beyond His judgments shall His love endure;
The mercy of the All Merciful is sure!'

1881.

THE ROCK-TOMB OF BRADORE.

H. Y. Hind, in *Explorations in the Interior of the Labrador Peninsula* (ii. 166), mentions the finding of a rock-tomb near the little fishing-port of Bradore, with the inscription upon it which is given in the poem.

A DREAR and desolate shore!
Where no tree unfolds its leaves,
And never the spring wind weaves
Green grass for the hunter's tread;
A land forsaken and dead,
Where the ghostly icebergs go
And come with the ebb and flow
Of the waters of Bradore!

A wanderer, from a land
By summer breezes fanned,
Looked round him, awed, subdued,
By the dreadful solitude,
Hearing alone the cry
Of sea-birds clanging by,
The crash and grind of the floe,
Wail of wind and wash of tide.
'O wretched land!' he cried,
'Land of all lands the worst,
God forsaken and curst!
Thy gates of rock should show
The words the Tuscan seer
Read in the Realm of Woe:
Hope entereth not here!'

Lo! at his feet there stood
A block of smooth larch wood,
Waif of some wandering wave,
Beside a rock-closed cave
By Nature fashioned for a grave;
Safe from the ravening bear
And fierce fowl of the air,
Wherein to rest was laid
A twenty summers' maid,
Whose blood had equal share
Of the lands of vine and snow,
Half French, half Eskimo.
In letters uneffaced,
Upon the block were traced
The grief and hope of man,
And thus the legend ran:
'We loved her!
Words cannot tell how well!
We loved her!
God loved her!
And called her home to peace and rest.
We love her!'

The stranger paused and read.
'O winter land!' he said,
'Thy right to be I own;
God leaves thee not alone.
And if thy fierce winds blow
Over drear wastes of rock and snow,
And at thy iron gates
The ghostly iceberg waits,
Thy homes and hearts are dear.
Thy sorrow o'er thy sacred dust
Is sanctified by hope and trust;
God's love and man's are here.
And love where'er it goes
Makes its own atmosphere;
Its flowers of Paradise
Take root in the eternal ice,
And bloom through Polar snows!'

1881.

THE BAY OF SEVEN ISLANDS.

The volume in which *The Bay of Seven Islands* was published was dedicated to the late Edwin Percy Whipple, to whom more than to any other person I was indebted for public recognition as one worthy of a place in American literature, at a time when it required a great degree of courage to urge such a claim for a proscribed abolitionist. Although younger than I, he had gained the reputation of a brilliant essayist, and was regarded as the highest American authority in criticism. His wit and wisdom enlivened a small literary circle of young men, including Thomas Starr King, the eloquent preacher, and Daniel N. Haskell, of the *Daily Transcript*, who gathered about our common friend James T. Fields at the Old Corner Bookstore. The poem which gave title to the volume I inscribed to my

friend and neighbor, Harriet Prescott Spofford, whose poems have lent a new interest to our beautiful river-valley.

FROM the green Amesbury hill which bears the name
Of that half mythic ancestor of mine
Who trod its slopes two hundred years ago,
Down the long valley of the Merrimac,
Midway between me and the river's mouth,
I see thy home, set like an eagle's nest
Among Deer Island's immemorial pines,
Crowning the crag on which the sunset breaks
Its last red arrow. Many a tale and song,
Which thou hast told or sung, I call to mind,
Softening with silvery mist the woods and hills,
The out-thrust headlands and inreaching bays
Of our northeastern coast-line, trending where
The Gulf, midsummer, feels the chill blockade
Of icebergs stranded at its northern gate.

To thee the echoes of the Island Sound
Answer not vainly, nor in vain the moan
Of the South Breaker prophesying storm.
And thou hast listened, like myself, to men
Sea-periled oft where Anticosti lies
Like a fell spider in its web of fog,
Or where the Grand Bank shallows with the wrecks
Of sunken fishers, and to whom strange isles
And frost-rimmed bays and trading stations seem
Familiar as Great Neck and Kettle Cove,
Nubble and Boon, the common names of home.
So let me offer thee this lay of mine,
Simple and homely, lacking much thy play
Of color and of fancy. If its theme
And treatment seem to thee befitting youth
Rather than age, let this be my excuse:
It has beguiled some heavy hours and called
Some pleasant memories up; and, better still,
Occasion lent me for a kindly word
To one who is my neighbor and my friend.

1883.

The skipper sailed out of the harbor mouth,
Leaving the apple-bloom of the South
For the ice of the Eastern seas,
In his fishing schooner Breeze.

Handsome and brave and young was he,
And the maids of Newbury sighed to see
His lessening white sail fall
Under the sea's blue wall.

Through the Northern Gulf and the misty screen
Of the isles of Mingan and Madeleine,
St. Paul's and Blanc Sablon,
The little Breeze sailed on,

Backward and forward, along the shore
Of lorn and desolate Labrador,
And found at last her way
To the Seven Islands Bay.

The little hamlet, nestling below
Great hills white with lingering snow,
With its tin-roofed chapel stood
Half hid in the dwarf spruce wood;

Green-turfed, flower-sown, the last outpost
Of summer upon the dreary coast,
With its gardens small and spare,
Sad in the frosty air.

Hard by where the skipper's schooner lay,
A fisherman's cottage looked away
Over isle and bay, and behind
On mountains dim-defined.

And there twin sisters, fair and young,
Laughed with their stranger guest, and sung
In their native tongue the lays
Of the old Provençal days.

Alike were they, save the faint outline
Of a scar on Suzette's forehead fine;
And both, it so befell,
Loved the heretic stranger well.

Both were pleasant to look upon,
But the heart of the skipper clave to one;
Though less by his eye than heart
He knew the twain apart.

Despite of alien race and creed,
Well did his wooing of Marguerite speed;
And the mother's wrath was vain
As the sister's jealous pain.

The shrill-tongued mistress her house forbade,
And solemn warning was sternly said
By the black-robed priest, whose word
As law the hamlet heard.

But half by voice and half by signs
The skipper said, 'A warm sun shines
On the green-banked Merrimac;
Wait, watch, till I come back.

'And when you see, from my mast head,
The signal fly of a kerchief red,
My boat on the shore shall wait;
Come, when the night is late.'

Ah! weighed with childhood's haunts and friends,
And all that the home sky overbends,
Did ever young love fail
To turn the trembling scale?

Under the night, on the wet sea sands,
Slowly unclasped their plighted hands:
One to the cottage hearth,
And one to his sailor's berth.

What was it the parting lovers heard?
Nor leaf, nor ripple, nor wing of bird,
But a listener's stealthy tread
On the rock-moss, crisp and dead.

He weighed his anchor, and fished once more
By the black coast-line of Labrador;
And by love and the north wind driven,
Sailed back to the Islands Seven.

In the sunset's glow the sisters twain
Saw the Breeze come sailing in again;
Said Suzette, 'Mother dear,
The heretic's sail is here.'

'Go, Marguerite, to your room, and hide;
Your door shall be bolted!' the mother cried:
While Suzette, ill at ease,
Watched the red sign of the Breeze.

At midnight, down to the waiting skiff
She stole in the shadow of the cliff;
And out of the Bay's mouth ran
The schooner with maid and man.

And all night long, on a restless bed,
Her prayers to the Virgin Marguerite said:
And thought of her lover's pain
Waiting for her in vain.

Did he pace the sands? Did he pause to hear
The sound of her light step drawing near?
And, as the slow hours passed,
Would he doubt her faith at last?

But when she saw through the misty pane,
The morning break on a sea of rain,
Could even her love avail
To follow his vanished sail?

Meantime the Breeze, with favoring wind,
Left the rugged Moisic hills behind,
And heard from an unseen shore
The falls of Manitou roar.

On the morrow's morn, in the thick, gray weather
They sat on the reeling deck together,
Lover and counterfeit
Of hapless Marguerite.

With a lover's hand, from her forehead fair
He smoothed away her jet-black hair.
What was it his fond eyes met?
The scar of the false Suzette!

Fiercely he shouted: 'Bear away
East by north for the Seven Isles Bay!'
The maiden wept and prayed,
But the ship her helm obeyed.

Once more the Bay of the Isles they found:
They heard the bell of the chapel sound,
And the chant of the dying sung
In the harsh, wild Indian tongue.

A feeling of mystery, change, and awe
Was in all they heard and all they saw:
Spell-bound the hamlet lay
In the hush of its lonely bay.

And when they came to the cottage door,
The mother rose up from her weeping sore,
And with angry gestures met
The scared look of Suzette.

'Here is your daughter,' the skipper said;
'Give me the one I love instead.'
But the woman sternly spake;
'Go, see if the dead will wake!'

He looked. Her sweet face still and white
And strange in the noonday taper light,
She lay on her little bed,
With the cross at her feet and head.

In a passion of grief the strong man bent
Down to her face, and, kissing it, went
Back to the waiting Breeze,
Back to the mournful seas.

Never again to the Merrimac
And Newbury's homes that bark came back.
Whether her fate she met
On the shores of Carraquette,

Miscou, or Tracadie, who can say?
But even yet at Seven Isles Bay
Is told the ghostly tale
Of a weird, unspoken sail,

In the pale, sad light of the Northern day
Seen by the blanketed Montagnais,
Or squaw, in her small kyack,
Crossing the spectre's track.

On the deck a maiden wrings her hands;
Her likeness kneels on the gray coast sands;
One in her wild despair,
And one in the trance of prayer.

She flits before no earthly blast,
The red sign fluttering from her mast,
Over the solemn seas,
The ghost of the schooner Breeze!

1882.

THE WISHING BRIDGE.

Among the legends sung or said
Along our rocky shore,
The Wishing Bridge of Marblehead
May well be sung once more.

An hundred years ago (so ran
The old-time story) all
Good wishes said above its span
Would, soon or late, befall.

If pure and earnest, never failed
The prayers of man or maid
For him who on the deep sea sailed,
For her at home who stayed.

Once thither came two girls from school,
And wished in childish glee:
And one would be a queen and rule,
And one the world would see.

Time passed; with change of hopes and fears,
And in the self-same place,
Two women, gray with middle years,
Stood, wondering, face to face.

With wakened memories, as they met,
They queried what had been:
'A poor man's wife am I, and yet,'
Said one, 'I am a queen.

'My realm a little homestead is,
Where, lacking crown and throne,
I rule by loving services
And patient toil alone.'

The other said: 'The great world lies
  Beyond me as it lay;
O'er love's and duty's boundaries
  My feet may never stray.

'I see but common sights of home,
  Its common sounds I hear,
My widowed mother's sick-bed room
  Sufficeth for my sphere.

'I read to her some pleasant page
  Of travel far and wide,
And in a dreamy pilgrimage
  We wander side by side.

'And when, at last, she falls asleep,
  My book becomes to me
A magic glass: my watch I keep,
  But all the world I see.

'A farm-wife queen your place you fill,
  While fancy's privilege
Is mine to walk the earth at will,
  Thanks to the Wishing Bridge.'

'Nay, leave the legend for the truth,'
  The other cried, 'and say
God gives the wishes of our youth,
  But in His own best way!'

1882.

HOW THE WOMEN WENT FROM DOVER.

The following is a copy of the warrant issued by Major Waldron, of Dover, in 1662. The Quakers, as was their wont, prophesied against him, and saw, as they supposed, the fulfilment of their prophecy when, many years after, he was killed by the Indians.

To the constables of Dover, Hampton, Salisbury, Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Wenham, Lynn, Boston, Roxbury, Dedham, and until these vagabond Quakers are carried out of this jurisdiction.

You, and every one of you, are required, in the King's Majesty's name, to take these vagabond Quakers, Anne Colman, Mary Tomkins, and Alice Ambrose, and make them fast to the cart's tail, and driving the cart through your several towns, to whip them upon their naked backs not exceeding ten stripes apiece on each of them, in each town; and so to convey them from constable to constable till they are out of this jurisdiction, as you will answer it at your peril; and this shall be your warrant.

RICHARD WALDRON.

Dated at Dover, December 22, 1662.

This warrant was executed only in Dover and Hampton. At Salisbury the constable refused to obey it. He was sustained by the town's people, who were under the influence of Major Robert Pike, the leading man in the lower valley of the Merrimac, who stood far in advance of his time, as an advocate of religious freedom, and an opponent of ecclesiastical authority. He had the moral courage to address an able and manly letter to the court at Salem, remonstrating against the witchcraft trials.

THE tossing spray of Cocheco's fall
Hardened to ice on its rocky wall,
As through Dover town in the chill, gray
  dawn,
Three women passed, at the cart-tail
  drawn!

Bared to the waist, for the north wind's
  grip
And keener sting of the constable's whip,
The blood that followed each hissing blow
Froze as it sprinkled the winter snow.

Priest and ruler, boy and maid
Followed the dismal cavalcade;
And from door and window, open thrown,
Looked and wondered gaffer and crone.

'God is our witness,' the victims cried,
'We suffer for Him who for all men
  died;
The wrong ye do has been done before,
We bear the stripes that the Master bore!

'And thou, O Richard Waldron, for whom
We hear the feet of a coming doom,
On thy cruel heart and thy hand of wrong
Vengeance is sure, though it tarry long.

'In the light of the Lord, a flame we see
Climb and kindle a proud roof-tree;
And beneath it an old man lying dead,
With stains of blood on his hoary head.'

'Smite, Goodman Hate-Evil!—harder still!'
The magistrate cried, 'lay on with a will!
Drive out of their bodies the Father of Lies,
Who through them preaches and prophesies!'

So into the forest they held their way,
By winding river and frost-rimmed bay,
Over wind-swept hills that felt the beat
Of the winter sea at their icy feet.

The Indian hunter, searching his traps,
Peered stealthily through the forest gaps;
And the outlying settler shook his head,—
'They 're witches going to jail,' he said.

At last a meeting-house came in view;
A blast on his horn the constable blew;
And the boys of Hampton cried up and down,
'The Quakers have come!' to the wondering town.

From barn and woodpile the goodman came;
The goodwife quitted her quilting frame,
With her child at her breast; and, hobbling slow,
The grandam followed to see the show.

Once more the torturing whip was swung,
Once more keen lashes the bare flesh stung.
'Oh, spare! they are bleeding!' a little maid cried,
And covered her face the sight to hide.

A murmur ran round the crowd: 'Good folks,'
Quoth the constable, busy counting the strokes,
'No pity to wretches like these is due,
They have beaten the gospel black and blue!'

Then a pallid woman, in wild-eyed fear,
With her wooden noggin of milk drew near.
'Drink, poor hearts!' a rude hand smote
Her draught away from a parching throat.

'Take heed,' one whispered, 'they 'll take your cow
For fines, as they took your horse and plough,
And the bed from under you.' 'Even so,'
She said; 'they are cruel as death, I know.'

Then on they passed, in the waning day,
Through Seabrook woods, a weariful way;
By great salt meadows and sand-hills bare,
And glimpses of blue sea here and there.

By the meeting-house in Salisbury town,
The sufferers stood, in the red sundown,
Bare for the lash! O pitying Night,
Drop swift thy curtain and hide the sight!

With shame in his eye and wrath on his lip
The Salisbury constable dropped his whip.
'This warrant means murder foul and red;
Cursed is he who serves it,' he said.

'Show me the order, and meanwhile strike
A blow at your peril!' said Justice Pike.
Of all the rulers the land possessed,
Wisest and boldest was he and best.

He scoffed at witchcraft; the priest he met
As man meets man; his feet he set
Beyond his dark age, standing upright,
Soul-free, with his face to the morning light.

He read the warrant: '*These convey*
From our precincts; at every town on the way
Give each ten lashes.' 'God judge the brute!
I tread his order under my foot!

'Cut loose these poor ones and let them go;
Come what will of it, all men shall know
No warrant is good, though backed by the Crown,
For whipping women in Salisbury town!'

The hearts of the villagers, half released
From creed of terror and rule of priest,
By a primal instinct owned the right
Of human pity in law's despite.

For ruth and chivalry only slept,
His Saxon manhood the yeoman kept;
Quicker or slower, the same blood ran
In the Cavalier and the Puritan.

The Quakers sank on their knees in praise
And thanks. A last, low sunset blaze
Flashed out from under a cloud, and shed
A golden glory on each bowed head.

The tale is one of an evil time,
When souls were fettered and thought was crime,
And heresy's whisper above its breath
Meant shameful scourging and bonds and death!

What marvel, that hunted and sorely tried,
Even woman rebuked and prophesied,
And soft words rarely answered back
The grim persuasion of whip and rack!

If her cry from the whipping-post and jail
Pierced sharp as the Kenite's driven nail,
O woman, at ease in these happier days,
Forbear to judge of thy sister's ways!

How much thy beautiful life may owe
To her faith and courage thou canst not know,
Nor how from the paths of thy calm retreat
She smoothed the thorns with her bleeding feet.

1883.

SAINT GREGORY'S GUEST.

A TALE for Roman guides to tell
To careless, sight-worn travellers still,
Who pause beside the narrow cell
Of Gregory on the Cælian Hill.

One day before the monk's door came
A beggar, stretching empty palms,
Fainting and fast-sick, in the name
Of the Most Holy asking alms.

And the monk answered, 'All I have
In this poor cell of mine I give,
The silver cup my mother gave;
In Christ's name take thou it, and live.'

Years passed; and, called at last to bear
The pastoral crook and keys of Rome,
The poor monk, in Saint Peter's chair,
Sat the crowned lord of Christendom.

'Prepare a feast,' Saint Gregory cried,
'And let twelve beggars sit thereat.'
The beggars came, and one beside,
An unknown stranger, with them sat.

'I asked thee not,' the Pontiff spake,
'O stranger; but if need be thine,
I bid thee welcome, for the sake
Of Him who is thy Lord and mine.'

A grave, calm face the stranger raised,
Like His who on Gennesaret trod,
Or His on whom the Chaldeans gazed,
Whose form was as the Son of God.

'Know'st thou,' he said, 'thy gift of old?'
And in the hand he lifted up
The Pontiff marvelled to behold
Once more his mother's silver cup.

'Thy prayers and alms have risen, and bloom
Sweetly among the flowers of heaven.
I am The Wonderful, through whom
Whate'er thou askest shall be given.'

He spake and vanished. Gregory fell
With his twelve guests in mute accord
Prone on their faces, knowing well
Their eyes of flesh had seen the Lord.

The old-time legend is not vain;
Nor vain thy art, Verona's Paul,
Telling it o'er and o'er again
On gray Vicenza's frescoed wall.

Still wheresoever pity shares
Its bread with sorrow, want, and sin,
And love the beggar's feast prepares,
The uninvited Guest comes in.

Unheard, because our ears are dull,
Unseen, because our eyes are dim,
He walks our earth, The Wonderful,
And all good deeds are done to Him.

1883.

BIRCHBROOK MILL.

A NOTELESS stream, the Birchbrook runs
Beneath its leaning trees;
That low, soft ripple is its own,
That dull roar is the sea's.

Of human signs it sees alone
The distant church spire's tip,
And, ghost-like, on a blank of gray,
The white sail of a ship.

No more a toiler at the wheel,
It wanders at its will;
Nor dam nor pond is left to tell
Where once was Birchbrook mill.

The timbers of that mill have fed
Long since a farmer's fires;
His doorsteps are the stones that ground
The harvest of his sires.

Man trespassed here; but Nature lost
No right of her domain;
She waited, and she brought the old
Wild beauty back again.

By day the sunlight through the leaves
Falls on its moist, green sod,
And wakes the violet bloom of spring
And autumn's golden-rod.

Its birches whisper to the wind,
The swallow dips her wings
In the cool spray, and on its banks
The gray song-sparrow sings.

But from it, when the dark night falls,
The school-girl shrinks with dread;
The farmer, home-bound from his fields,
Goes by with quickened tread.

They dare not pause to hear the grind
Of shadowy stone on stone;
The plashing of a water-wheel
Where wheel there now is none.

Has not a cry of pain been heard
Above the clattering mill?
The pawing of an unseen horse,
Who waits his mistress still?

Yet never to the listener's eye
Has sight confirmed the sound;
A wavering birch line marks alone
The vacant pasture ground.

No ghostly arms fling up to heaven
The agony of prayer;
No spectral steed impatient shakes
His white mane on the air.

The meaning of that common dread
No tongue has fitly told;
The secret of the dark surmise
The brook and birches hold.

What nameless horror of the past
Broods here forevermore?
What ghost his unforgiven sin
Is grinding o'er and o'er?

Does, then, immortal memory play
The actor's tragic part,
Rehearsals of a mortal life
And unveiled human heart?

God's pity spare a guilty soul
That drama of its ill,
And let the scenic curtain fall
On Birchbrook's haunted mill!

1884.

THE TWO ELIZABETHS.

Read at the unveiling of the bust of Elizabeth Fry at the Friends' School, Providence, R. I.

A.D. 1209.

AMIDST Thuringia's wooded hills she dwelt,
A high-born princess, servant of the poor,
Sweetening with gracious words the food she dealt
To starving throngs at Wartburg's blazoned door.

A blinded zealot held her soul in chains,
Cramped the sweet nature that he could not kill,
Scarred her fair body with his penance-pains,
And gauged her conscience by his narrow will.

God gave her gifts of beauty and of grace,
With fast and vigil she denied them all;
Unquestioning, with sad, pathetic face,
She followed meekly at her stern guide's call.

So drooped and died her home-blown rose of bliss
In the chill rigor of a discipline
That turned her fond lips from her children's kiss,
And made her joy of motherhood a sin.

To their sad level by compassion led,
One with the low and vile herself she made,
While thankless misery mocked the hand that fed,
And laughed to scorn her piteous masquerade.

But still, with patience that outwearied hate,
She gave her all while yet she had to give;
And then her empty hands, importunate,
In prayer she lifted that the poor might live.

Sore pressed by grief, and wrongs more hard to bear,
And dwarfed and stifled by a harsh control,
She kept life fragrant with good deeds and prayer,
And fresh and pure the white flower of her soul.

Death found her busy at her task: one word
Alone she uttered as she paused to die,
'Silence!'—then listened even as one who heard
With song and wing the angels drawing nigh!

Now Fra Angelico's roses fill her hands,
And, on Murillo's canvas, Want and Pain
Kneel at her feet. Her marble image stands
Worshipped and crowned in Marburg's holy fane.

Yea, wheresoe'er her Church its cross uprears,
Wide as the world her story still is told;
In manhood's reverence, woman's prayers and tears,
She lives again whose grave is centuries old.

And still, despite the weakness or the blame
Of blind submission to the blind, she hath
A tender place in hearts of every name,
And more than Rome owns Saint Elizabeth!

A.D. 1780.

Slow ages passed: and lo! another came,
An English matron, in whose simple faith
Nor priestly rule nor ritual had claim,
A plain, uncanonized Elizabeth.

No sackcloth robe, nor ashen-sprinkled hair,
Nor wasting fast, nor scourge, nor vigil long,
Marred her calm presence. God had made her fair,
And she could do His goodly work no wrong.

Their yoke is easy and their burden light
Whose sole confessor is the Christ of God;
Her quiet trust and faith transcending sight
Smoothed to her feet the difficult paths she trod.

And there she walked, as duty bade her go,
Safe and unsullied as a cloistered nun,
Shamed with her plainness Fashion's gaudy show,
And overcame the world she did not shun.

In Earlham's bowers, in Plashet's liberal hall,
In the great city's restless crowd and din,
Her ear was open to the Master's call,
And knew the summons of His voice within.

Tender as mother, beautiful as wife,
Amidst the throngs of prisoned crime she stood
In modest raiment faultless as her life,
The type of England's worthiest womanhood!

To melt the hearts that harshness turned to stone
The sweet persuasion of her lips sufficed,
And guilt, which only hate and fear had known,
Saw in her own the pitying love of Christ.

So wheresoe'er the guiding Spirit went
She followed, finding every prison cell
It opened for her sacred as a tent
Pitched by Gennesaret or by Jacob's well.

And Pride and Fashion felt her strong appeal,
And priest and ruler marvelled as they saw
How hand in hand went wisdom with her zeal,
And woman's pity kept the bounds of law.

She rests in God's peace; but her memory stirs
The air of earth as with an angel's wings,
And warms and moves the hearts of men like hers,
The sainted daughter of Hungarian kings.

United now, the Briton and the Hun,
Each, in her own time, faithful unto death,
Live sister souls! in name and spirit one,
Thuringia's saint and our Elizabeth!

1885.

REQUITAL.

As Islam's Prophet, when his last day drew
Nigh to its close, besought all men to say
Whom he had wronged, to whom he then should pay
A debt forgotten, or for pardon sue,
And, through the silence of his weeping friends,
A strange voice cried: 'Thou owest me a debt,'
'Allah be praised!' he answered. 'Even yet
He gives me power to make to thee amends.
O friend! I thank thee for thy timely word.'
So runs the tale. Its lesson all may heed,
For all have sinned in thought, or word, or deed,
Or, like the Prophet, through neglect have erred.
All need forgiveness, all have debts to pay
Ere the night cometh, while it still is day.

1885.

THE HOMESTEAD.[27]

Against the wooded hills it stands,
Ghost of a dead home, staring through
Its broken lights on wasted lands
Where old-time harvests grew.

Unploughed, unsown, by scythe unshorn,
The poor, forsaken farm-fields lie,
Once rich and rife with golden corn
And pale green breadths of rye.

Of healthful herb and flower bereft,
The garden plot no housewife keeps;
Through weeds and tangle only left,
The snake, its tenant, creeps.

A lilac spray, still blossom-clad,
Sways slow before the empty rooms;
Beside the roofless porch a sad
Pathetic red rose blooms.

His track, in mould and dust of drouth,
On floor and hearth the squirrel leaves,
And in the fireless chimney's mouth
His web the spider weaves.

The leaning barn, about to fall,
Resounds no more on husking eves;
No cattle low in yard or stall,
No thresher beats his sheaves.

So sad, so drear! It seems almost
Some haunting Presence makes its sign;
That down yon shadowy lane some ghost
Might drive his spectral kine!

O home so desolate and lorn!
Did all thy memories die with thee?
Were any wed, were any born,
Beneath this low roof-tree?

Whose axe the wall of forest broke,
And let the waiting sunshine through?
What goodwife sent the earliest smoke
Up the great chimney flue?

Did rustic lovers hither come?
Did maidens, swaying back and forth
In rhythmic grace, at wheel and loom,
Make light their toil with mirth?

Did child feet patter on the stair?
Did boyhood frolic in the snow?
Did gray age, in her elbow chair,
Knit, rocking to and fro?

The murmuring brook, the sighing breeze,
The pine's slow whisper, cannot tell;
Low mounds beneath the hemlock-trees
Keep the home secrets well.

Cease, mother-land, to fondly boast
Of sons far off who strive and thrive,
Forgetful that each swarming host
Must leave an emptier hive!

O wanderers from ancestral soil,
Leave noisome mill and chaffering store:
Gird up your loins for sturdier toil,
And build the home once more!

Come back to bayberry-scented slopes,
And fragrant fern, and ground-nut vine;
Breathe airs blown over holt and copse
Sweet with black birch and pine.

What matter if the gains are small
That life's essential wants supply?
Your homestead's title gives you all
That idle wealth can buy.

All that the many-dollared crave,
The brick-walled slaves of 'Change and mart,
Lawns, trees, fresh air, and flowers, you have,
More dear for lack of art.

Your own sole masters, freedom-willed,
With none to bid you go or stay,
Till the old fields your fathers tilled,
As manly men as they!

With skill that spares your toiling hands,
And chemic aid that science brings,
Reclaim the waste and outworn lands,
And reign thereon as kings!

1886.

HOW THE ROBIN CAME.

AN ALGONQUIN LEGEND.

Happy young friends, sit by me,
Under May's blown apple-tree,
While these home-birds in and out
Through the blossoms flit about.
Hear a story, strange and old,
By the wild red Indians told,
How the robin came to be:
Once a great chief left his son,—
Well-beloved, his only one,—
When the boy was well-nigh grown,
In the trial-lodge alone.
Left for tortures long and slow
Youths like him must undergo,
Who their pride of manhood test,
Lacking water, food, and rest.

Seven days the fast he kept,
Seven nights he never slept.
Then the young boy, wrung with pain,
Weak from nature's overstrain,

Faltering, moaned a low complaint:
'Spare me, father, for I faint!'
But the chieftain, haughty-eyed,
Hid his pity in his pride.
'You shall be a hunter good,
Knowing never lack of food:
You shall be a warrior great,
Wise as fox and strong as bear;
Many scalps your belt shall wear,
If with patient heart you wait
Bravely till your task is done.
Better you should starving die
Than that boy and squaw should cry
Shame upon your father's son!'

When next morn the sun's first rays
Glistened on the hemlock sprays,
Straight that lodge the old chief sought,
And boiled samp and moose meat brought.
'Rise and eat, my son!' he said.
Lo, he found the poor boy dead!
As with grief his grave they made,
And his bow beside him laid,
Pipe, and knife, and wampum-braid,
On the lodge-top overhead,
Preening smooth its breast of red
And the brown coat that it wore,
Sat a bird, unknown before.
And as if with human tongue,
'Mourn me not,' it said, or sung;
'I, a bird, am still your son,
Happier than if hunter fleet,
Or a brave, before your feet
Laying scalps in battle won.
Friend of man, my song shall cheer
Lodge and corn-land; hovering near,
To each wigwam I shall bring
Tidings of the coming spring;
Every child my voice shall know
In the moon of melting snow,
When the maple's red bud swells,
And the wind-flower lifts its bells.
As their fond companion
Men shall henceforth own your son,
And my song shall testify
That of human kin am I.'

Thus the Indian legend saith
How, at first, the robin came
With a sweeter life from death,
Bird for boy, and still the same.
If my young friends doubt that this
Is the robin's genesis,
Not in vain is still the myth
If a truth be found therewith:
Unto gentleness belong
Gifts unknown to pride and wrong;
Happier far than hate is praise,—
He who sings than he who slays.

1886.

BANISHED FROM MASSACHUSETTS.

1660.

On a painting by E. A. Abbey. The General Court of Massachusetts enacted Oct. 19, 1658, that 'any person or persons of the cursed sect of Quakers' should, on conviction of the same, be banished, on pain of death, from the jurisdiction of the commonwealth.

Over the threshold of his pleasant home
Set in green clearings passed the exiled Friend,
In simple trust, misdoubting not the end.
'Dear heart of mine!' he said, 'the time has come
To trust the Lord for shelter.' One long gaze
The goodwife turned on each familiar thing,—
The lowing kine, the orchard blossoming,
The open door that showed the hearth-fire's blaze,—
And calmly answered, 'Yes, He will provide.'
Silent and slow they crossed the homestead's bound,
Lingering the longest by their child's grave-mound.
'Move on, or stay and hang!' the sheriff cried.
They left behind them more than home or land,
And set sad faces to an alien strand.

Safer with winds and waves than human wrath,
With ravening wolves than those whose zeal for God
Was cruelty to man, the exiles trod

Drear leagues of forest without guide or path,
Or launching frail boats on the uncharted sea,
Round storm-vexed capes, whose teeth of granite ground
The waves to foam, their perilous way they wound,
Enduring all things so their souls were free.
Oh, true confessors, shaming them who did
Anew the wrong their Pilgrim Fathers bore!
For you the Mayflower spread her sail once more,
Freighted with souls, to all that duty bid
Faithful as they who sought an unknown land,
O'er wintry seas, from Holland's Hook of Sand!

So from his lost home to the darkening main,
Bodeful of storm, stout Macy held his way,
And, when the green shore blended with the gray,
His poor wife moaned: 'Let us turn back again.'
'Nay, woman, weak of faith, kneel down,' said he,
'And say thy prayers: the Lord Himself will steer;
And led by Him, nor man nor devils I fear!'[28]
So the gray Southwicks, from a rainy sea,
Saw, far and faint, the loom of land, and gave
With feeble voices thanks for friendly ground
Whereon to rest their weary feet, and found
A peaceful death-bed and a quiet grave
Where, ocean-walled, and wiser than his age,
The lord of Shelter scorned the bigot's rage.

Aquidneck's isle, Nantucket's lonely shores,
And Indian-haunted Narragansett saw
The way-worn travellers round their camp-fire draw,
Or heard the plashing of their weary oars.
And every place whereon they rested grew
Happier for pure and gracious womanhood,
And men whose names for stainless honor stood,
Founders of States and rulers wise and true.
The Muse of history yet shall make amends
To those who freedom, peace, and justice taught,
Beyond their dark age led the van of thought,
And left unforfeited the name of Friends.
O mother State, how foiled was thy design!
The gain was theirs, the loss alone was thine.

1886.

THE BROWN DWARF OF RÜGEN.

The hint of this ballad is found in Arndt's *Märchen*, Berlin, 1816. The ballad appeared first in *St. Nicholas*, whose young readers were advised, while smiling at the absurd superstition, to remember that bad companionship and evil habits, desires, and passions are more to be dreaded now than the Elves and Trolls who frightened the children of past ages.

THE pleasant isle of Rügen looks the Baltic water o'er,
To the silver-sanded beaches of the Pomeranian shore;

And in the town of Rambin a little boy and maid
Plucked the meadow-flowers together and in the sea-surf played.

Alike were they in beauty if not in their degree:
He was the Amptman's first-born, the miller's child was she.

Now of old the isle of Rügen was full of Dwarfs and Trolls,
The brown-faced little Earth-men, the people without souls;

And for every man and woman in Rügen's island found
Walking in air and sunshine, a Troll was underground.

It chanced the little maiden, one morning, strolled away
Among the haunted Nine Hills, where the elves and goblins play.

That day, in barley fields below, the harvesters had known
Of evil voices in the air, and heard the small horns blown.

She came not back; the search for her in field and wood was vain:
They cried her east, they cried her west, but she came not again.

'She's down among the Brown Dwarfs,' said the dream-wives wise and old,
And prayers were made, and masses said, and Rambin's church bell tolled.

Five years her father mourned her; and then John Deitrich said:
'I will find my little playmate, be she alive or dead.'

He watched among the Nine Hills, he heard the Brown Dwarfs sing,
And saw them dance by moonlight merrily in a ring.

And when their gay-robed leader tossed up his cap of red,
Young Deitrich caught it as it fell, and thrust it on his head.

The Troll came crouching at his feet and wept for lack of it.
'Oh, give me back my magic cap, for your great head unfit!'

'Nay,' Deitrich said; 'the Dwarf who throws his charmëd cap away,
Must serve its finder at his will, and for his folly pay.

'You stole my pretty Lisbeth, and hid her in the earth;
And you shall ope the door of glass and let me lead her forth.'

She will not come; she's one of us; she's mine!' the Brown Dwarf said;
'The day is set, the cake is baked, to-morrow we shall wed.'

'The fell fiend fetch thee!' Deitrich cried, 'and keep thy foul tongue still.
Quick! open, to thy evil world, the glass door of the hill!'

The Dwarf obeyed; and youth and Troll down the long stairway passed,
And saw in dim and sunless light a country strange and vast.

Weird, rich, and wonderful, he saw the elfin under-land,—
Its palaces of precious stones, its streets of golden sand.

He came unto a banquet-hall with tables richly spread,
Where a young maiden served to him the red wine and the bread.

How fair she seemed among the Trolls so ugly and so wild!
Yet pale and very sorrowful, like one who never smiled!

Her low, sweet voice, her gold-brown hair, her tender blue eyes seemed
Like something he had seen elsewhere or something he had dreamed.

He looked; he clasped her in his arms; he knew the long-lost one;
'O Lisbeth! See thy playmate—I am the Amptman's son!'

She leaned her fair head on his breast, and through her sobs she spoke:
'Oh, take me from this evil place, and from the elfin folk!

'And let me tread the grass-green fields and smell the flowers again,
And feel the soft wind on my cheek and hear the dropping rain!

'And oh, to hear the singing bird, the rustling of the tree,
The lowing cows, the bleat of sheep, the voices of the sea;

'And oh, upon my father's knee to sit
beside the door,
And hear the bell of vespers ring in Rambin church once more!'

He kissed her cheek, he kissed her lips;
the Brown Dwarf groaned to see,
And tore his tangled hair and ground his long teeth angrily.

But Deitrich said: 'For five long years this tender Christian maid
Has served you in your evil world, and well must she be paid!

'Haste!—hither bring me precious gems, the richest in your store;
Then when we pass the gate of glass, you'll take your cap once more.'

No choice was left the baffled Troll, and, murmuring, he obeyed,
And filled the pockets of the youth and apron of the maid.

They left the dreadful under-land and passed the gate of glass;
They felt the sunshine's warm caress, they trod the soft, green grass.

And when, beneath, they saw the Dwarf stretch up to them his brown
And crooked claw-like fingers, they tossed his red cap down.

Oh, never shone so bright a sun, was never sky so blue,
As hand in hand they homeward walked the pleasant meadows through!

And never sang the birds so sweet in Rambin's woods before,
And never washed the waves so soft along the Baltic shore;

And when beneath his door-yard trees
the father met his child,
The bells rung out their merriest peal, the folks with joy ran wild.

And soon from Rambin's holy church the twain came forth as one,
The Amptman kissed a daughter, the miller blest a son.

John Deitrich's fame went far and wide, and nurse and maid crooned o'er
Their cradle song: 'Sleep on, sleep well, the Trolls shall come no more!'

For in the haunted Nine Hills he set a cross of stone;
And Elf and Brown Dwarf sought in vain a door where door was none.

The tower he built in Rambin, fair Rügen's pride and boast,
Looked o'er the Baltic water to the Pomeranian coast;

And, for his worth ennobled, and rich beyond compare,
Count Deitrich and his lovely bride dwelt long and happy there.

1888.

Poems of Nature

THE FROST SPIRIT.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes! You may trace his footsteps now
On the naked woods and the blasted fields and the brown hill's withered brow.
He has smitten the leaves of the gray old trees where their pleasant green came forth,
And the winds, which follow wherever he goes, have shaken them down to earth.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes! from the frozen Labrador,
From the icy bridge of the Northern seas, which the white bear wanders o'er,
Where the fisherman's sail is stiff with ice, and the luckless forms below
In the sunless cold of the lingering night into marble statues grow!

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes! on the rushing Northern blast,
And the dark Norwegian pines have bowed as his fearful breath went past.
With an unscorched wing he has hurried on, where the fires of Hecla glow
On the darkly beautiful sky above and the ancient ice below.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes! and the quiet lake shall feel
The torpid touch of his glazing breath, and ring to the skater's heel;
And the streams which danced on the broken rocks, or sang to the leaning grass,
Shall bow again to their winter chain, and in mournful silence pass.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes! Let us meet him as we may,
And turn with the light of the parlor-fire his evil power away;
And gather closer the circle round, when that firelight dances high,
And laugh at the shriek of the baffled Fiend as his sounding wing goes by!

1830.

THE MERRIMAC.

'The Indians speak of a beautiful river, far to the south, which they call Merrimac.'—Sieur de Monts, 1604.

Stream of my fathers! sweetly still
The sunset rays thy valley fill;
Poured slantwise down the long defile,
Wave, wood, and spire beneath them smile.
I see the winding Powow fold
The green hill in its belt of gold,
And following down its wavy line,
Its sparkling waters blend with thine.
There's not a tree upon thy side,
Nor rock, which thy returning tide
As yet hath left abrupt and stark
Above thy evening water-mark;
No calm cove with its rocky hem,
No isle whose emerald swells begem

Thy broad, smooth current; not a sail
Bowed to the freshening ocean gale;
No small boat with its busy oars,
Nor gray wall sloping to thy shores;
Nor farm-house with its maple shade,
Or rigid poplar colonnade,
But lies distinct and full in sight,
Beneath this gush of sunset light.
Centuries ago, that harbor-bar,
Stretching its length of foam afar,
And Salisbury's beach of shining sand,
And yonder island's wave-smoothed strand,
Saw the adventurer's tiny sail,
Flit, stooping from the eastern gale;
And o'er these woods and waters broke
The cheer from Britain's hearts of oak,
As brightly on the voyager's eye,
Weary of forest, sea, and sky,
Breaking the dull continuous wood,
The Merrimac rolled down his flood;
Mingling that clear pellucid brook,
Which channels vast Agioochook
When spring-time's sun and shower unlock
The frozen fountains of the rock,
And more abundant waters given
From that pure lake, 'The Smile of Heaven,'
Tributes from vale and mountain-side,—
With ocean's dark, eternal tide!

On yonder rocky cape, which braves
The stormy challenge of the waves,
Midst tangled vine and dwarfish wood,
The hardy Anglo-Saxon stood,[29]
Planting upon the topmost crag
The staff of England's battle-flag;
And, while from out its heavy fold
Saint George's crimson cross unrolled,
Midst roll of drum and trumpet blare,
And weapons brandishing in air,
He gave to that lone promontory
The sweetest name in all his story;[30]
Of her, the flower of Islam's daughters,
Whose harems look on Stamboul's waters,—
Who, when the chance of war had bound
The Moslem chain his limbs around,
Wreathed o'er with silk that iron chain,
Soothed with her smiles his hours of pain,
And fondly to her youthful slave
A dearer gift than freedom gave.

But look! the yellow light no more
Streams down on wave and verdant shore;
And clearly on the calm air swells
The twilight voice of distant bells.
From Ocean's bosom, white and thin,
The mists come slowly rolling in;
Hills, woods, the river's rocky rim,
Amidst the sea-like vapor swim,
While yonder lonely coast-light, set
Within its wave-washed minaret,
Half quenched, a beamless star and pale,
Shines dimly through its cloudy veil!

Home of my fathers!—I have stood
Where Hudson rolled his lordly flood:
Seen sunrise rest and sunset fade
Along his frowning Palisade;
Looked down the Appalachian peak
On Juniata's silver streak;
Have seen along his valley gleam
The Mohawk's softly winding stream;
The level light of sunset shine
Through broad Potomac's hem of pine;
And autumn's rainbow-tinted banner
Hang lightly o'er the Susquehanna;
Yet wheresoe'er his step might be,
Thy wandering child looked back to thee!
Heard in his dreams thy river's sound
Of murmuring on its pebbly bound,
The unforgotten swell and roar
Of waves on thy familiar shore;
And saw, amidst the curtained gloom
And quiet of his lonely room,
Thy sunset scenes before him pass;
As, in Agrippa's magic glass,
The loved and lost arose to view,
Remembered groves in greenness grew,
Bathed still in childhood's morning dew,
Along whose bowers of beauty swept
Whatever Memory's mourners wept,
Sweet faces, which the charnel kept,
Young, gentle eyes, which long had slept;
And while the gazer leaned to trace,
More near, some dear familiar face,
He wept to find the vision flown,—
A phantom and a dream alone!

1841.

HAMPTON BEACH.

THE sunlight glitters keen and bright,
Where, miles away,
Lies stretching to my dazzled sight
A luminous belt, a misty light,
Beyond the dark pine bluffs and wastes
of sandy gray.

The tremulous shadow of the Sea!
Against its ground
Of silvery light, rock, hill, and tree,
Still as a picture, clear and free,
With varying outline mark the coast for
miles around.

On—on—we tread with loose-flung rein
Our seaward way,
Through dark-green fields and blossoming grain,
Where the wild brier-rose skirts the lane,
And bends above our heads the flowering
locust spray.

Ha! like a kind hand on my brow
Comes this fresh breeze,
Cooling its dull and feverish glow,
While through my being seems to flow
The breath of a new life, the healing of
the seas!

Now rest we, where this grassy mound
His feet hath set
In the great waters, which have bound
His granite ankles greenly round
With long and tangled moss, and weeds
with cool spray wet.

Good-by to Pain and Care! I take
Mine ease to-day:
Here where these sunny waters break,
And ripples this keen breeze, I shake
All burdens from the heart, all weary
thoughts away.

I draw a freer breath, I seem
Like all I see—
Waves in the sun, the white-winged gleam
Of sea-birds in the slanting beam,
And far-off sails which flit before the
south-wind free.

So when Time's veil shall fall asunder,
The soul may know
No fearful change, nor sudden wonder,
Nor sink the weight of mystery under,
But with the upward rise, and with the
vastness grow.

And all we shrink from now may seem
No new revealing;
Familiar as our childhood's stream,
Or pleasant memory of a dream
The loved and cherished Past upon the
new life stealing.

Serene and mild the untried light
May have its dawning;
And, as in summer's northern night
The evening and the dawn unite,
The sunset hues of Time blend with the
soul's new morning.

I sit alone; in foam and spray
Wave after wave
Breaks on the rocks which, stern and gray,
Shoulder the broken tide away,
Or murmurs hoarse and strong through
mossy cleft and cave.

What heed I of the dusty land
And noisy town?
I see the mighty deep expand
From its white line of glimmering
sand
To where the blue of heaven on bluer
waves shuts down!

In listless quietude of mind,
I yield to all
The change of cloud and wave and wind;
And passive on the flood reclined,
I wander with the waves, and with them
rise and fall.

But look, thou dreamer! wave and shore
In shadow lie;
The night-wind warns me back once more
To where, my native hill-tops o'er,
Bends like an arch of fire the glowing
sunset sky.

So then, beach, bluff, and wave, farewell!
I bear with me
No token stone nor glittering shell,
But long and oft shall Memory tell
Of this brief thoughtful hour of musing by the Sea.

1843.

A DREAM OF SUMMER.

Bland as the morning breath of June
The southwest breezes play;
And, through its haze, the winter noon
Seems warm as summer's day.
The snow-plumed Angel of the North
Has dropped his icy spear;
Again the mossy earth looks forth,
Again the streams gush clear.

The fox his hillside cell forsakes,
The muskrat leaves his nook,
The bluebird in the meadow brakes
Is singing with the brook.
'Bear up, O Mother Nature!' cry
Bird, breeze, and streamlet free;
'Our winter voices prophesy
Of summer days to thee!'

So, in those winters of the soul,
By bitter blasts and drear
O'erswept from Memory's frozen pole,
Will sunny days appear.
Reviving Hope and Faith, they show
The soul its living powers,
And how beneath the winter's snow
Lie germs of summer flowers!

The Night is mother of the Day,
The Winter of the Spring,
And ever upon old Decay
The greenest mosses cling.
Behind the cloud the starlight lurks,
Through showers the sunbeams fall;
For God, who loveth all His works,
Has left His hope with all!

4th, 1st mo., 1847.

THE LAKESIDE.

The shadows round the inland sea
Are deepening into night;
Slow up the slopes of Ossipee
They chase the lessening light.
Tired of the long day's blinding heat,
I rest my languid eye,
Lake of the Hills! where, cool and sweet,
Thy sunset waters lie!

Along the sky, in wavy lines,
O'er isle and reach and bay,
Green-belted with eternal pines,
The mountains stretch away.
Below, the maple masses sleep
Where shore with water blends,
While midway on the tranquil deep
The evening light descends.

So seemed it when yon hill's red crown,
Of old, the Indian trod,
And, through the sunset air, looked down
Upon the Smile of God.
To him of light and shade the laws
No forest skeptic taught;
Their living and eternal Cause
His truer instinct sought.

He saw these mountains in the light
Which now across them shines;
This lake, in summer sunset bright,
Walled round with sombering pines.
God near him seemed; from earth and skies
His loving voice he heard,
As, face to face, in Paradise,
Man stood before the Lord.

Thanks, O our Father! that, like him,
Thy tender love I see,
In radiant hill and woodland dim,
And tinted sunset sea.
For not in mockery dost Thou fill
Our earth with light and grace;
Thou hid'st no dark and cruel will
Behind Thy smiling face!

1849.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS.

Gone hath the Spring, with all its flowers,
And gone the Summer's pomp and show,
And Autumn, in his leafless bowers,
Is waiting for the Winter's snow.

I said to Earth, so cold and gray,
'An emblem of myself thou art.'
'Not so,' the Earth did seem to say,
'For Spring shall warm my frozen heart.'

I soothe my wintry sleep with dreams
Of warmer sun and softer rain,
And wait to hear the sound of streams
And songs of merry birds again.

But thou, from whom the Spring hath gone,
For whom the flowers no longer blow,
Who standest blighted and forlorn,
Like Autumn waiting for the snow;

No hope is thine of sunnier hours,
Thy Winter shall no more depart;
No Spring revive thy wasted flowers,
Nor Summer warm thy frozen heart.

1849.

ON RECEIVING AN EAGLE'S QUILL FROM LAKE SUPERIOR.

All day the darkness and the cold
Upon my heart have lain,
Like shadows on the winter sky,
Like frost upon the pane;

But now my torpid fancy wakes,
And, on thy Eagle's plume,
Rides forth, like Sindbad on his bird,
Or witch upon her broom!

Below me roar the rocking pines,
Before me spreads the lake
Whose long and solemn-sounding waves
Against the sunset break.

I hear the wild Rice-Eater thresh
The grain he has not sown;
I see, with flashing scythe of fire,
The prairie harvest mown!

I hear the far-off voyager's horn;
I see the Yankee's trail,—
His foot on every mountain-pass,
On every stream his sail.

By forest, lake, and waterfall,
I see his pedler show;
The mighty mingling with the mean,
The lofty with the low.

He 's whittling by St. Mary's Falls,
Upon his loaded wain;
He 's measuring o'er the Pictured Rocks,
With eager eyes of gain.

I hear the mattock in the mine,
The axe-stroke in the dell,
The clamor from the Indian lodge,
The Jesuit chapel bell!

I see the swarthy trappers come
From Mississippi's springs;
And war-chiefs with their painted brows,
And crests of eagle wings.

Behind the scared squaw's birch canoe,
The steamer smokes and raves;
And city lots are staked for sale
Above old Indian graves.

I hear the tread of pioneers
Of nations yet to be;
The first low wash of waves, where soon
Shall roll a human sea.

The rudiments of empire here
Are plastic yet and warm;
The chaos of a mighty world
Is rounding into form!

Each rude and jostling fragment soon
Its fitting place shall find,—
The raw material of a State,
Its muscle and its mind!

And, westering still, the star which leads
The New World in its train
Has tipped with fire the icy spears
Of many a mountain chain.

The snowy cones of Oregon
Are kindling on its way;
And California's golden sands
Gleam brighter in its ray!

Then blessings on thy eagle quill,
As, wandering far and wide,
I thank thee for this twilight dream
And Fancy's airy ride!

Yet, welcomer than regal plumes,
Which Western trappers find,
Thy free and pleasant thoughts, chance sown,
Like feathers on the wind.

Thy symbol be the mountain-bird,
Whose glistening quill I hold;
Thy home the ample air of hope,
And memory's sunset gold!

In thee, let joy with duty join,
And strength unite with love,
The eagle's pinions folding round
The warm heart of the dove!

So, when in darkness sleeps the vale
Where still the blind bird clings,
The sunshine of the upper sky
Shall glitter on thy wings!

1849.

APRIL.

'The spring comes slowly up this way.
Christabel.

'T is the noon of the spring-time, yet never a bird
In the wind-shaken elm or the maple is heard;
For green meadow-grasses wide levels of snow,
And blowing of drifts where the crocus should blow;
Where wind-flower and violet, amber and white,
On south-sloping brooksides should smile in the light,
O'er the cold winter-beds of their late-waking roots
The frosty flake eddies, the ice-crystal shoots;
And, longing for light, under wind-driven heaps,
Round the boles of the pine-wood the ground-laurel creeps,
Unkissed of the sunshine, unbaptized of showers,
With buds scarcely swelled, which should burst into flowers!
We wait for thy coming, sweet wind of the south!
For the touch of thy light wings, the kiss of thy mouth;
For the yearly evangel thou bearest from God,
Resurrection and life to the graves of the sod!
Up our long river-valley, for days, have not ceased
The wail and the shriek of the bitter northeast,
Raw and chill, as if winnowed through ices and snow,
All the way from the land of the wild Esquimau,
Until all our dreams of the land of the blest,
Like that red hunter's, turn to the sunny southwest.
O soul of the spring-time, its light and its breath,
Bring warmth to this coldness, bring life to this death;
Renew the great miracle; let us behold
The stone from the mouth of the sepulchre rolled,
And Nature, like Lazarus, rise, as of old!
Let our faith, which in darkness and coldness has lain,
Revive with the warmth and the brightness again,
And in blooming of flower and budding of tree
The symbols and types of our destiny see;
The life of the spring-time, the life of the whole,
And, as sun to the sleeping earth, love to the soul!

1852.

PICTURES.

I.

LIGHT, warmth, and sprouting greenness, and o'er all
Blue, stainless, steel-bright ether, raining down
Tranquillity upon the deep-hushed town,
The freshening meadows, and the hill-sides brown;
Voice of the west-wind from the hills of pine,
And the brimmed river from its distant fall,
Low hum of bees, and joyous interlude
Of bird-songs in the streamlet-skirting wood,—
Heralds and prophecies of sound and sight,
Blessed forerunners of the warmth and light,
Attendant angels to the house of prayer,
With reverent footsteps keeping pace with mine,—
Once more, through God's great love, with you I share
A morn of resurrection sweet and fair
As that which saw, of old, in Palestine,
Immortal Love uprising in fresh bloom
From the dark night and winter of the tomb!

2d, 5th mo., 1852.

II.

White with its sun-bleached dust, the pathway winds
Before me; dust is on the shrunken grass,
And on the trees beneath whose boughs I pass;
Frail screen against the Hunter of the sky,
Who, glaring on me with his lidless eye,
While mounting with his dog-star high and higher
Ambushed in light intolerable, unbinds
The burnished quiver of his shafts of fire.
Between me and the hot fields of his South
A tremulous glow, as from a furnace-mouth,
Glimmers and swims before my dazzled sight,
As if the burning arrows of his ire
Broke as they fell, and shattered into light;
Yet on my cheek I feel the western wind,
And hear it telling to the orchard trees,
And to the faint and flower-forsaken bees,
Tales of fair meadows, green with constant streams,
And mountains rising blue and cool behind,
Where in moist dells the purple orchis gleams,
And starred with white the virgin's bower is twined.
So the o'erwearied pilgrim, as he fares
Along life's summer waste, at times is fanned,
Even at noontide, by the cool, sweet airs
Of a serener and a holier land,
Fresh as the morn, and as the dewfall bland.
Breath of the blessed Heaven for which we pray,
Blow from the eternal hills! make glad our earthly way!

8th mo., 1852.

SUMMER BY THE LAKESIDE.

LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE.

I. NOON.

WHITE clouds, whose shadows haunt the deep,
Light mists, whose soft embraces keep
The sunshine on the hills asleep!

O isles of calm! O dark, still wood!
And stiller skies that overbrood
Your rest with deeper quietude!

O shapes and hues, dim beckoning, through
Yon mountain gaps, my longing view
Beyond the purple and the blue,

To stiller sea and greener land,
And softer lights and airs more bland,
And skies,—the hollow of God's hand!

Transfused through you, O mountain friends!
With mine your solemn spirit blends,
And life no more hath separate ends.

I read each misty mountain sign,
I know the voice of wave and pine,
And I am yours, and ye are mine.

Life's burdens fall, its discords cease,
I lapse into the glad release
Of Nature's own exceeding peace.

O welcome calm of heart and mind!
As falls yon fir-tree's loosened rind
To leave a tenderer growth behind,

So fall the weary years away;
A child again, my head I lay
Upon the lap of this sweet day.

This western wind hath Lethean powers,
Yon noonday cloud nepenthe showers,
The lake is white with lotus-flowers!

Even Duty's voice is faint and low,
And slumberous Conscience, waking slow,
Forgets her blotted scroll to show.

The Shadow which pursues us all,
Whose ever-nearing steps appall,
Whose voice we hear behind us call,—

That Shadow blends with mountain gray,
It speaks but what the light waves say,—
Death walks apart from Fear to-day!

Rocked on her breast, these pines and I
Alike on Nature's love rely;
And equal seems to live or die.

Assured that He whose presence fills
With light the spaces of these hills
No evil to His creatures wills,
The simple faith remains, that He
Will do, whatever that may be,
The best alike for man and tree.

What mosses over one shall grow,
What light and life the other know,
Unanxious, leaving Him to show.

II. EVENING.

Yon mountain's side is black with night,
While, broad-orbed, o'er its gleaming crown
The moon, slow-rounding into sight,
On the hushed inland sea looks down.

How start to light the clustering isles,
Each silver-hemmed! How sharply show
The shadows of their rocky piles,
And tree-tops in the wave below!

How far and strange the mountains seem,
Dim-looming through the pale, still light!
The vague, vast grouping of a dream,
They stretch into the solemn night.

Beneath, lake, wood, and peopled vale,
Hushed by that presence grand and grave,
Are silent, save the cricket's wail,
And low response of leaf and wave.

Fair scenes! whereto the Day and Night
Make rival love, I leave ye soon,
What time before the eastern light
The pale ghost of the setting moon

Shall hide behind yon rocky spines,
And the young archer, Morn, shall break
His arrows on the mountain pines,
And, golden-sandalled, walk the lake!

Farewell! around this smiling bay
Gay-hearted Health, and Life in bloom,
With lighter steps than mine, may stray
In radiant summers yet to come.

But none shall more regretful leave
These waters and these hills than I:
Or, distant, fonder dream how eve
Or dawn is painting wave and sky;

How rising moons shine sad and mild
On wooded isle and silvering bay;
Or setting suns beyond the piled
And purple mountains lead the day;

Nor laughing girl, nor bearding boy,
Nor full-pulsed manhood, lingering here,
Shall add, to life's abounding joy,
The charmed repose to suffering dear.

Still waits kind Nature to impart
Her choicest gifts to such as gain
An entrance to her loving heart
Through the sharp discipline of pain.

Forever from the Hand that takes
One blessing from us others fall;
And, soon or late, our Father makes
His perfect recompense to all!

Oh, watched by Silence and the Night,
And folded in the strong embrace
Of the great mountains, with the light
Of the sweet heavens upon thy face,

Lake of the Northland! keep thy dower
Of beauty still, and while above
Thy solemn mountains speak of power,
Be thou the mirror of God's love.

1853.

THE FRUIT-GIFT.

Last night, just as the tints of autumn's sky
Of sunset faded from our hills and streams,
I sat, vague listening, lapped in twilight dreams,
To the leaf's rustle, and the cricket's cry.
Then, like that basket, flush with summer fruit,
Dropped by the angels at the Prophet's foot,
Came, unannounced, a gift of clustered sweetness,
Full-orbed, and glowing with the prisoned beams
Of summery suns, and rounded to completeness
By kisses of the south-wind and the dew.
Thrilled with a glad surprise, methought I knew
The pleasure of the homeward-turning Jew,
When Eshcol's clusters on his shoulders lay,
Dropping their sweetness on his desert way.

I said, 'This fruit beseems no world of sin.
Its parent vine, rooted in Paradise,
O'ercrept the wall, and never paid the price
Of the great mischief,—an ambrosial tree,
Eden's exotic, somehow smuggled in,
To keep the thorns and thistles company.'
Perchance our frail, sad mother plucked in haste
A single vine-slip as she passed the gate,
Where the dread sword alternate paled and burned,
And the stern angel, pitying her fate,
Forgave the lovely trespasser, and turned
Aside his face of fire; and thus the waste
And fallen world hath yet its annual taste
Of primal good, to prove of sin the cost,
And show by one gleaned ear the mighty harvest lost.

1854.

FLOWERS IN WINTER.

PAINTED UPON A PORTE LIVRE.

How strange to greet, this frosty morn,
In graceful counterfeit of flowers,
These children of the meadows, born
Of sunshine and of showers!

How well the conscious wood retains
The pictures of its flower-sown home,
The lights and shades, the purple stains,
And golden hues of bloom!

It was a happy thought to bring
To the dark season's frost and rime
This painted memory of spring,
This dream of summer-time.

Our hearts are lighter for its sake.
Our fancy's age renews its youth,
And dim-remembered fictions take
The guise of present truth.

A wizard of the Merrimac,—
So old ancestral legends say,—
Could call green leaf and blossom back
To frosted stem and spray.

The dry logs of the cottage wall,
Beneath his touch, put out their leaves;
The clay-bound swallow, at his call,
Played round the icy eaves.

The settler saw his oaken flail
Take bud, and bloom before his eyes;
From frozen pools he saw the pale,
Sweet summer lilies rise.

To their old homes, by man profaned,
Came the sad dryads, exiled long,
And through their leafy tongues complained
Of household use and wrong.

The beechen platter sprouted wild,
The pipkin wore its old-time green,
The cradle o'er the sleeping child
Became a leafy screen.

Haply our gentle friend hath met,
While wandering in her sylvan quest,
Haunting his native woodlands yet,
That Druid of the West;

And, while the dew on leaf and flower
Glistened in moonlight clear and still,
Learned the dusk wizard's spell of power,
And caught his trick of skill.

But welcome, be it new or old,
The gift which makes the day more bright,
And paints, upon the ground of cold
And darkness, warmth and light!

Without is neither gold nor green;
Within, for birds, the birch-logs sing;
Yet, summer-like, we sit between
The autumn and the spring.

The one, with bridal blush of rose,
And sweetest breath of woodland balm,
And one whose matron lips unclose
In smiles of saintly calm.

Fill soft and deep, O winter snow!
The sweet azalea's oaken dells,
And hide the bank where roses blow,
And swing the azure bells!

O'erlay the amber violet's leaves,
The purple aster's brookside home,
Guard all the flowers her pencil gives
A life beyond their bloom.

And she, when spring comes round again,
By greening slope and singing flood
Shall wander, seeking, not in vain,
Her darlings of the wood.

1855.

THE MAYFLOWERS.

The trailing arbutus, or mayflower, grows abundantly in the vicinity of Plymouth, and was the first flower that greeted the Pilgrims after their fearful winter. The name *mayflower* was familiar in England, as the application of it to the historic vessel shows, but it was applied by the English, and still is, to the hawthorn. Its use in New England in connection with *Epigæa repens* dates from a very early day, some claiming that the first Pilgrims so used it, in affectionate memory of the vessel and its English flower association.

Sad Mayflower! watched by winter stars,
And nursed by winter gales,
With petals of the sleeted spars,
And leaves of frozen sails!

What had she in those dreary hours,
Within her ice-rimmed bay,
In common with the wild-wood flowers,
The first sweet smiles of May?

Yet, 'God be praised!' the Pilgrim said,
Who saw the blossoms peer
Above the brown leaves, dry and dead,
'Behold our Mayflower here!'

'God wills it: here our rest shall be,
Our years of wandering o'er;
For us the Mayflower of the sea
Shall spread her sails no more.'

O sacred flowers of faith and hope,
As sweetly now as then
Ye bloom on many a birchen slope,
In many a pine-dark glen.

Behind the sea-wall's rugged length,
Unchanged, your leaves unfold,
Like love behind the manly strength
Of the brave hearts of old.

So live the fathers in their sons,
Their sturdy faith be ours,
And ours the love that overruns
Its rocky strength with flowers.

The Pilgrim's wild and wintry day
Its shadow round us draws;
The Mayflower of his stormy bay,
Our Freedom's struggling cause.

But warmer suns erelong shall bring
To life the frozen sod;
And through dead leaves of hope shall spring
Afresh the flowers of God!

1856.

THE LAST WALK IN AUTUMN.

I.

O'ER the bare woods, whose outstretched hands
Plead with the leaden heavens in vain,
I see, beyond the valley lands,
The sea's long level dim with rain.

Around me all things, stark and dumb,
Seem praying for the snows to come,
And, for the summer bloom and greenness gone,
With winter's sunset lights and dazzling morn atone.

II.

Along the river's summer walk,
The withered tufts of asters nod;
And trembles on its arid stalk
The hoar plume of the golden-rod.
And on a ground of sombre fir,
And azure-studded juniper,
The silver birch its buds of purple shows,
And scarlet berries tell where bloomed the sweet wild-rose!

III.

With mingled sound of horns and bells,
A far-heard clang, the wild geese fly,
Storm-sent, from Arctic moors and fells,
Like a great arrow through the sky,
Two dusky lines converged in one,
Chasing the southward-flying sun;
While the brave snow-bird and the hardy jay
Call to them from the pines, as if to bid them stay.

IV.

I passed this way a year ago:
The wind blew south; the noon of day
Was warm as June's; and save that snow
Flecked the low mountains far away,
And that the vernal-seeming breeze
Mocked faded grass and leafless trees,
I might have dreamed of summer as I lay,
Watching the fallen leaves with the soft wind at play.

V.

Since then, the winter blasts have piled
The white pagodas of the snow
On these rough slopes, and, strong and wild,
Yon river, in its overflow

Of spring-time rain and sun, set free,
Crashed with its ices to the sea;
And over these gray fields, then green and gold,
The summer corn has waved, the thunder's organ rolled.

VI.

Rich gift of God! A year of time!
What pomp of rise and shut of day,
What hues wherewith our Northern clime
Makes autumn's dropping woodlands gay,
What airs outblown from ferny dells,
And clover-bloom and sweetbrier smells,
What songs of brooks and birds, what fruits and flowers,
Green woods and moonlit snows, have in its round been ours!

VII.

I know not how, in other lands,
The changing seasons come and go;
What splendors fall on Syrian sands,
What purple lights on Alpine snow!
Nor how the pomp of sunrise waits
On Venice at her watery gates;
A dream alone to me is Arno's vale,
And the Alhambra's halls are but a traveller's tale.

VIII.

Yet, on life's current, he who drifts
Is one with him who rows or sails;
And he who wanders widest lifts
No more of beauty's jealous veils
Than he who from his doorway sees
The miracle of flowers and trees,
Feels the warm Orient in the noonday air,
And from cloud minarets hears the sunset call to prayer!

IX.

The eye may well be glad that looks
Where Pharpar's fountains rise and fall;
But he who sees his native brooks
Laugh in the sun, has seen them all.
The marble palaces of Ind
Rise round him in the snow and wind;
From his lone sweetbrier Persian Hafiz smiles,
And Rome's cathedral awe is in his woodland aisles.

X.

And thus it is my fancy blends
The near at hand and far and rare;
And while the same horizon bends
Above the silver-sprinkled hair
Which flashed the light of morning skies
On childhood's wonder-lifted eyes,
Within its round of sea and sky and field,
Earth wheels with all her zones, the Kosmos stands revealed.

XI.

And thus the sick man on his bed,
The toiler to his task-work bound,
Behold their prison-walls outspread,
Their clipped horizon widen round!
While freedom-giving fancy waits,
Like Peter's angel at the gates,
The power is theirs to baffle care and pain,
To bring the lost world back, and make it theirs again!

XII.

What lack of goodly company,
When masters of the ancient lyre
Obey my call, and trace for me
Their words of mingled tears and fire!
I talk with Bacon, grave and wise,
I read the world with Pascal's eyes;
And priest and sage, with solemn brows austere,
And poets, garland-bound, the Lords of Thought, draw near.

XIII.

Methinks, O friend, I hear thee say,
'In vain the human heart we mock;
Bring living guests who love the day,
Not ghosts who fly at crow of cock!

The herbs we share with flesh and blood
Are better than ambrosial food
With laurelled shades.' I grant it, nothing loath,
But doubly blest is he who can partake of both.

XIV.

He who might Plato's banquet grace,
Have I not seen before me sit,
And watched his puritanic face,
With more than Eastern wisdom lit?
Shrewd mystic! who, upon the back
Of his Poor Richard's Almanac
Writing the Sufi's song, the Gentoo's dream,
Links Manu's age of thought to Fulton's age of steam!

XV.

Here too, of answering love secure,
Have I not welcomed to my hearth
The gentle pilgrim troubadour,
Whose songs have girdled half the earth;
Whose pages, like the magic mat
Whereon the Eastern lover sat,
Have borne me over Rhine-land's purple vines,
And Nubia's tawny sands, and Phrygia's mountain pines!

XVI.

And he, who to the lettered wealth
Of ages adds the lore unpriced,
The wisdom and the moral health,
The ethics of the school of Christ;
The statesman to his holy trust,
As the Athenian archon, just,
Struck down, exiled like him for truth alone,
Has he not graced my home with beauty all his own?

XVII.

What greetings smile, what farewells wave,
What loved ones enter and depart!
The good, the beautiful, the brave,
The Heaven-lent treasures of the heart!
How conscious seems the frozen sod
And beechen slope whereon they trod!
The oak-leaves rustle, and the dry grass bends
Beneath the shadowy feet of lost or absent friends.

XVIII.

Then ask not why to these bleak hills
I cling, as clings the tufted moss,
To bear the winter's lingering chills,
The mocking spring's perpetual loss.
I dream of lands where summer smiles,
And soft winds blow from spicy isles,
But scarce would Ceylon's breath of flowers be sweet,
Could I not feel thy soil, New England, at my feet!

XIX.

At times I long for gentler skies,
And bathe in dreams of softer air,
But homesick tears would fill the eyes
That saw the Cross without the Bear.
The pine must whisper to the palm,
The north-wind break the tropic calm;
And with the dreamy languor of the Line,
The North's keen virtue blend, and strength to beauty join.

XX.

Better to stem with heart and hand
The roaring tide of life, than lie,
Unmindful, on its flowery strand,
Of God's occasions drifting by!
Better with naked nerve to bear
The needles of this goading air,
Than, in the lap of sensual ease, forego
The godlike power to do, the godlike aim to know.

XXI.

Home of my heart! to me more fair
Than gay Versailles or Windsor's halls,
The painted, shingly town-house where
The freeman's vote for Freedom falls!

The simple roof where prayer is made,
Than Gothic groin and colonnade;
The living temple of the heart of man,
Than Rome's sky-mocking vault, or many-spired Milan!

XXII.

More dear thy equal village schools,
Where rich and poor the Bible read,
Than classic halls where Priestcraft rules,
And Learning wears the chains of Creed;
Thy glad Thanksgiving, gathering in
The scattered sheaves of home and kin,
Than the mad license ushering Lenten pains,
Or holidays of slaves who laugh and dance in chains.

XXIII.

And sweet homes nestle in these dales,
And perch along these wooded swells;
And, blest beyond Arcadian vales,
They hear the sound of Sabbath bells!
Here dwells no perfect man sublime,
Nor woman winged before her time,
But with the faults and follies of the race,
Old home-bred virtues hold their not unhonored place.

XXIV.

Here manhood struggles for the sake
Of mother, sister, daughter, wife,
The graces and the loves which make
The music of the march of life;
And woman, in her daily round
Of duty, walks on holy ground.
No unpaid menial tills the soil, nor here
Is the bad lesson learned at human rights to sneer.

XXV.

Then let the icy north-wind blow
The trumpets of the coming storm,
To arrowy sleet and blinding snow
Yon slanting lines of rain transform.
Young hearts shall hail the drifted cold,
As gayly as I did of old;
And I, who watch them through the frosty pane,
Unenvious, live in them my boyhood o'er again.

XXVI.

And I will trust that He who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads,
And stains these mosses green and gold,
Will still, as He hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine;
Grant what we ask aright, from wrong debar,
And, as the earth grows dark, make brighter every star!

XXVII.

I have not seen, I may not see,
My hopes for man take form in fact,
But God will give the victory
In due time; in that faith I act.
And he who sees the future sure,
The baffling present may endure,
And bless, meanwhile, the unseen Hand that leads
The heart's desires beyond the halting step of deeds.

XXVIII.

And thou, my song, I send thee forth,
Where harsher songs of mine have flown;
Go, find a place at home and hearth
Where'er thy singer's name is known;
Revive for him the kindly thought
Of friends; and they who love him not,
Touched by some strain of thine, perchance may take
The hand he proffers all, and thank him for thy sake.

1857.

THE FIRST FLOWERS.

For ages, on our river borders,
These tassels in their tawny bloom,
And willowy studs of downy silver,
Have prophesied of Spring to come.

For ages have the unbound waters
Smiled on them from their pebbly hem,
And the clear carol of the robin
And song of bluebird welcomed them.

But never yet from smiling river,
Or song of early bird, have they
Been greeted with a gladder welcome
Than whispers from my heart to-day.

They break the spell of cold and darkness,
The weary watch of sleepless pain;
And from my heart, as from the river,
The ice of winter melts again.

Thanks, Mary! for this wild-wood token
Of Freya's footsteps drawing near;
Almost, as in the rune of Asgard,
The growing of the grass I hear.

It is as if the pine-trees called me
From ceilëd room and silent books,
To see the dance of woodland shadows,
And hear the song of April brooks!

As in the old Teutonic ballad
Of Odenwald live bird and tree,
Together live in bloom and music,
I blend in song thy flowers and thee.

Earth's rocky tablets bear forever
The dint of rain and small bird's track:
Who knows but that my idle verses
May leave some trace by Merrimac!

The bird that trod the mellow layers
Of the young earth is sought in vain;
The cloud is gone that wove the sandstone,
From God's design, with threads of rain!

So, when this fluid age we live in
Shall stiffen round my careless rhyme,
Who made the vagrant tracks may puzzle
The savants of the coming time;

And, following out their dim suggestions,
Some idly-curious hand may draw
My doubtful portraiture, as Cuvier
Drew fish and bird from fin and claw.

And maidens in the far-off twilights,
Singing my words to breeze and stream,
Shall wonder if the old-time Mary
Were real, or the rhymer's dream!

1st, 3d mo., 1857.

THE OLD BURYING-GROUND.[21]

Our vales are sweet with fern and rose,
Our hills are maple-crowned;
But not from them our fathers chose
The village burying-ground.

The dreariest spot in all the land
To Death they set apart;
With scanty grace from Nature's hand,
And none from that of Art.

A winding wall of mossy stone,
Frost-flung and broken, lines
A lonesome acre thinly grown
With grass and wandering vines.

Without the wall a birch-tree shows
Its drooped and tasselled head;
Within, a stag-horned sumach grows,
Fern-leafed, with spikes of red.

There, sheep that graze the neighboring plain
Like white ghosts come and go,
The farm-horse drags his fetlock chain,
The cow-bell tinkles slow.

Low moans the river from its bed,
The distant pines reply;
Like mourners shrinking from the dead,
They stand apart and sigh.

Unshaded smites the summer sun,
Unchecked the winter blast;
The school-girl learns the place to shun,
With glances backward cast.

For thus our fathers testified,
That he might read who ran,
The emptiness of human pride,
The nothingness of man.

They dared not plant the grave with flowers,
Nor dress the funeral sod,
Where, with a love as deep as ours,
They left their dead with God.

The hard and thorny path they kept
From beauty turned aside;
Nor missed they over those who slept
The grace to life denied.

Yet still the wilding flowers would blow,
The golden leaves would fall,
The seasons come, the seasons go,
And God be good to all.

Above the graves the blackberry hung
In bloom and green its wreath,
And harebells swung as if they rung
The chimes of peace beneath.

The beauty Nature loves to share,
The gifts she hath for all,
The common light, the common air,
O'ercrept the graveyard's wall.

It knew the glow of eventide,
The sunrise and the noon,
And glorified and sanctified
It slept beneath the moon.

With flowers or snow-flakes for its sod,
Around the seasons ran,
And evermore the love of God
Rebuked the fear of man.

We dwell with fears on either hand
Within a daily strife,
And spectral problems waiting stand
Before the gates of life.

The doubts we vainly seek to solve,
The truths we know, are one;
The known and nameless stars revolve
Around the Central Sun.

And if we reap as we have sown,
And take the dole we deal,
The law of pain is love alone,
The wounding is to heal.

Unharmed from change to change we glide,
We fall as in our dreams;
The far-off terror at our side
A smiling angel seems.

Secure on God's all-tender heart
Alike rest great and small;
Why fear to lose our little part,
When He is pledged for all?

O fearful heart and troubled brain!
Take hope and strength from this,—
That Nature never hints in vain,
Nor prophesies amiss.

Her wild birds sing the same sweet stave,
Her lights and airs are given
Alike to playground and the grave;
And over both is Heaven.

1858.

THE PALM-TREE.

Is it the palm, the cocoa-palm,
On the Indian Sea, by the isles of balm?
Or is it a ship in the breezeless calm?

A ship whose keel is of palm beneath,
Whose ribs of palm have a palm-bark sheath,
And a rudder of palm it steereth with.

Branches of palm are its spars and rails,
Fibres of palm are its woven sails,
And the rope is of palm that idly trails!

What does the good ship bear so well?
The cocoa-nut with its stony shell,
And the milky sap of its inner cell.

What are its jars, so smooth and fine,
But hollowed nuts, filled with oil and wine,
And the cabbage that ripens under the Line?

Who smokes his nargileh, cool and calm?
The master, whose cunning and skill could charm
Cargo and ship from the bounteous palm.

In the cabin he sits on a palm-mat soft,
From a beaker of palm his drink is quaffed,
And a palm-thatch shields from the sun aloft!

His dress is woven of palmy strands,
And he holds a palm-leaf scroll in his hands,
Traced with the Prophet's wise commands!

The turban folded about his head
Was daintily wrought of the palm-leaf braid,
And the fan that cools him of palm was made.

Of threads of palm was the carpet spun
Whereon he kneels when the day is done,
And the foreheads of Islam are bowed as one!

To him the palm is a gift divine,
Wherein all uses of man combine,—
House, and raiment, and food, and wine!

And, in the hour of his great release,
His need of the palm shall only cease
With the shroud wherein he lieth in peace.

'Allah il Allah!' he sings his psalm,
On the Indian Sea, by the isles of balm;
'Thanks to Allah who gives the palm!'

1858.

THE RIVER PATH.[32]

No bird-song floated down the hill,
The tangled bank below was still;

No rustle from the birchen stem,
No ripple from the water's hem.

The dusk of twilight round us grew,
We felt the falling of the dew;

For, from us, ere the day was done,
The wooded hills shut out the sun.

But on the river's farther side
We saw the hill-tops glorified,—

A tender glow, exceeding fair,
A dream of day without its glare.

With us the damp, the chill, the gloom:
With them the sunset's rosy bloom;

While dark, through willowy vistas seen,
The river rolled in shade between.

From out the darkness where we trod,
We gazed upon those hills of God,

Whose light seemed not of moon or sun.
We spake not, but our thought was one.

We paused, as if from that bright shore
Beckoned our dear ones gone before;

And stilled our beating hearts to hear
The voices lost to mortal ear!

Sudden our pathway turned from night;
The hills swung open to the light;

Through their green gates the sunshine showed,
A long, slant splendor downward flowed.

Down glade and glen and bank it rolled;
It bridged the shaded stream with gold;

And, borne on piers of mist, allied
The shadowy with the sunlit side!

'So,' prayed we, 'when our feet draw near
The river dark, with mortal fear,

'And the night cometh chill with dew,
O Father! let Thy light break through!

'So let the hills of doubt divide,
So bridge with faith the sunless tide!

'So let the eyes that fail on earth
On Thy eternal hills look forth;

'And in Thy beckoning angels know
The dear ones whom we loved below!'

1860.

MOUNTAIN PICTURES.

I. FRANCONIA FROM THE PEMIGEWASSET.

Once more, O Mountains of the North, unveil
Your brows, and lay your cloudy mantles by!
And once more, ere the eyes that seek ye fail,
Uplift against the blue walls of the sky
Your mighty shapes, and let the sunshine weave
Its golden net-work in your belting woods,
Smile down in rainbows from your falling floods,
And on your kingly brows at morn and eve
Set crowns of fire! So shall my soul receive
Haply the secret of your calm and strength,
Your unforgotten beauty interfuse
My common life, your glorious shapes and hues
And sun-dropped splendors at my bidding come,
Loom vast through dreams, and stretch in billowy length
From the sea-level of my lowland home!

They rise before me! Last night's thunder-gust
Roared not in vain: for where its lightnings thrust
Their tongues of fire, the great peaks seem so near,
Burned clean of mist, so starkly bold and clear,
I almost pause the wind in the pines to hear,
The loose rock's fall, the steps of browsing deer.
The clouds that shattered on yon slide-worn walls
And splintered on the rocks their spears of rain
Have set in play a thousand waterfalls,
Making the dusk and silence of the woods
Glad with the laughter of the chasing floods,
And luminous with blown spray and silver gleams,
While, in the vales below, the dry-lipped streams
Sing to the freshened meadow-lands again.
So, let me hope, the battle-storm that beats
The land with hail and fire may pass away
With its spent thunders at the break of day,
Like last night's clouds, and leave, as it retreats,
A greener earth and fairer sky behind,
Blown crystal clear by Freedom's Northern wind!

II. MONADNOCK FROM WACHUSET.

I would I were a painter, for the sake
Of a sweet picture, and of her who led,
A fitting guide, with reverential tread,
Into that mountain mystery. First a lake
Tinted with sunset; next the wavy lines
Of far receding hills; and yet more far,
Monadnock lifting from his night of pines
His rosy forehead to the evening star.
Beside us, purple-zoned, Wachuset laid
His head against the West, whose warm light made
His aureole; and o'er him, sharp and clear,
Like a shaft of lightning in mid-launching stayed,
A single level cloud-line, shone upon
By the fierce glances of the sunken sun,
Menaced the darkness with its golden spear!

So twilight deepened round us. Still and black
The great woods climbed the mountain at our back;

And on their skirts, where yet the lingering day
On the shorn greenness of the clearing lay,
The brown old farm-house like a bird's-nest hung.
With home-life sounds the desert air was stirred:
The bleat of sheep along the hill we heard,
The bucket plashing in the cool, sweet well,
The pasture-bars that clattered as they fell;
Dogs barked, fowls fluttered, cattle lowed; the gate
Of the barn-yard creaked beneath the merry weight
Of sun-brown children, listening, while they swung,
The welcome sound of supper-call to hear;
And down the shadowy lane, in tinklings clear,
The pastoral curfew of the cow-bell rung.
Thus soothed and pleased, our backward path we took,
Praising the farmer's home. He only spake,
Looking into the sunset o'er the lake,
Like one to whom the far-off is most near:
'Yes, most folks think it has a pleasant look;
I love it for my good old mother's sake,
Who lived and died here in the peace of God!'
The lesson of his words we pondered o'er,
As silently we turned the eastern flank
Of the mountain, where its shadow deepest sank,
Doubling the night along our rugged road:
We felt that man was more than his abode,—
The inward life than Nature's raiment more;
And the warm sky, the sundown-tinted hill,
The forest and the lake, seemed dwarfed and dim
Before the saintly soul, whose human will
Meekly in the Eternal footsteps trod,
Making her homely toil and household ways
An earthly echo of the song of praise
Swelling from angel lips and harps of seraphim.

1862.

THE VANISHERS.[33]

SWEETEST of all childlike dreams
In the simple Indian lore
Still to me the legend seems
Of the shapes who flit before.

Flitting, passing, seen and gone,
Never reached nor found at rest,
Baffling search, but beckoning on
To the Sunset of the Blest.

From the clefts of mountain rocks,
Through the dark of lowland firs,
Flash the eyes and flow the locks
Of the mystic Vanishers!

And the fisher in his skiff,
And the hunter on the moss,
Hear their call from cape and cliff,
See their hands the birch-leaves toss.

Wistful, longing, through the green
Twilight of the clustered pines,
In their faces rarely seen
Beauty more than mortal shines.

Fringed with gold their mantles flow
On the slopes of westering knolls;
In the wind they whisper low
Of the Sunset Land of Souls.

Doubt who may, O friend of mine!
Thou and I have seen them too;
On before with beck and sign
Still they glide, and we pursue.

More than clouds of purple trail
In the gold of setting day;
More than gleams of wing or sail
Beckon from the sea-mist gray.

Glimpses of immortal youth,
Gleams and glories seen and flown,
Far-heard voices sweet with truth,
Airs from viewless Eden blown;

Beauty that eludes our grasp,
Sweetness that transcends our taste,
Loving hands we may not clasp,
Shining feet that mock our haste;

Gentle eyes we closed below,
Tender voices heard once more,
Smile and call us, as they go
On and onward, still before.

Guided thus, O friend of mine!
Let us walk our little way,
Knowing by each beckoning sign
That we are not quite astray.

Chase we still, with baffled feet,
Smiling eye and waving hand,
Sought and seeker soon shall meet,
Lost and found, in Sunset Land!

1864.

THE PAGEANT.

A SOUND as if from bells of silver,
Or elfin cymbals smitten clear,
Through the frost-pictured panes I hear.

A brightness which outshines the morning,
A splendor brooking no delay,
Beckons and tempts my feet away.

I leave the trodden village highway
For virgin snow-paths glimmering through
A jewelled elm-tree avenue;

Where, keen against the walls of sapphire,
The gleaming tree-bolls, ice-embossed,
Hold up their chandeliers of frost.

I tread in Orient halls enchanted,
I dream the Saga's dream of caves
Gem-lit beneath the North Sea waves!

I walk the land of Eldorado,
I touch its mimic garden bowers,
Its silver leaves and diamond flowers!

The flora of the mystic mine-world
Around me lifts on crystal stems
The petals of its clustered gems!

What miracle of weird transforming
In this wild work of frost and light,
This glimpse of glory infinite!

This foregleam of the Holy City
Like that to him of Patmos given,
The white bride coming down from heaven!

How flash the ranked and mail-clad alders,
Through what sharp-glancing spears of reeds
The brook its muffled water leads!

Yon maple, like the bush of Horeb,
Burns unconsumed: a white, cold fire
Rays out from every grassy spire.

Each slender rush and spike of mullein,
Low laurel shrub and drooping fern,
Transfigured, blaze where'er I turn.

How yonder Ethiopian hemlock
Crowned with his glistening circlet stands!
What jewels light his swarthy hands!

Here, where the forest opens southward,
Between its hospitable pines,
As through a door, the warm sun shines.

The jewels loosen on the branches,
And lightly, as the soft winds blow,
Fall, tinkling, on the ice below.

And through the clashing of their cymbals
I hear the old familiar fall
Of water down the rocky wall,

Where, from its wintry prison breaking,
In dark and silence hidden long,
The brook repeats its summer song.

One instant flashing in the sunshine,
Keen as a sabre from its sheath,
Then lost again the ice beneath.

I hear the rabbit lightly leaping,
The foolish screaming of the jay,
The chopper's axe-stroke far away;

The clamor of some neighboring barnyard,
The lazy cock's belated crow,
Or cattle-tramp in crispy snow.

And, as in some enchanted forest
The lost knight hears his comrades sing,
And, near at hand, their bridles ring,—

So welcome I these sounds and voices,
These airs from far-off summer blown,
This life that leaves me not alone.

For the white glory overawes me;
The crystal terror of the seer
Of Chebar's vision blinds me here.

Rebuke me not, O sapphire heaven!
Thou stainless earth, lay not on me,
Thy keen reproach of purity,

If, in this august presence-chamber,
I sigh for summer's leaf-green gloom
And warm airs thick with odorous bloom!

Let the strange frost-work sink and crumble,
And let the loosened tree-boughs swing,
Till all their bells of silver ring.

Shine warmly down, thou sun of noontime,
On this chill pageant, melt and move
The winter's frozen heart with love.

And, soft and low, thou wind south-blowing,
Breathe through a veil of tenderest haze
Thy prophecy of summer days.

Come with thy green relief of promise,
And to this dead, cold splendor bring
The living jewels of the spring!

1869.

THE PRESSED GENTIAN.

The time of gifts has come again,
And, on my northern window-pane,
Outlined against the day's brief light,
A Christmas token hangs in sight.
The wayside travellers, as they pass,
Mark the gray disk of clouded glass;
And the dull blankness seems, perchance,
Folly to their wise ignorance.

They cannot from their outlook see
The perfect grace it hath for me;
For there the flower, whose fringes through
The frosty breath of autumn blew,
Turns from without its face of bloom
To the warm tropic of my room,
As fair as when beside its brook
The hue of bending skies it took.

So from the trodden ways of earth,
Seem some sweet souls who veil their worth,
And offer to the careless glance
The clouding gray of circumstance.
They blossom best where hearth-fires burn,
To loving eyes alone they turn
The flowers of inward grace, that hide
Their beauty from the world outside.

But deeper meanings come to me,
My half-immortal flower, from thee!
Man judges from a partial view,
None ever yet his brother knew;
The Eternal Eye that sees the whole
May better read the darkened soul,
And find, to outward sense denied,
The flower upon its inmost side!

1872.

A MYSTERY.

The river hemmed with leaning trees
Wound through its meadows green;
A low, blue line of mountains showed
The open pines between.

One sharp, tall peak above them all
Clear into sunlight sprang:
I saw the river of my dreams,
The mountains that I sang!

No clue of memory led me on,
But well the ways I knew;
A feeling of familiar things
With every footstep grew.

Not otherwise above its crag
Could lean the blasted pine;
Not otherwise the maple hold
Aloft its red ensign.

So up the long and shorn foot-hills
The mountain road should creep;
So, green and low, the meadow fold
Its red-haired kine asleep.

The river wound as it should wind;
Their place the mountains took;
The white torn fringes of their clouds
Wore no unwonted look.

Yet ne'er before that river's rim
Was pressed by feet of mine,
Never before mine eyes had crossed
That broken mountain line.

A presence, strange at once and known,
Walked with me as my guide;
The skirts of some forgotten life
Trailed noiseless at my side.

Was it a dim-remembered dream?
Or glimpse through æons old?
The secret which the mountains kept
The river never told.

But from the vision ere it passed
A tender hope I drew,
And, pleasant as a dawn of spring,
The thought within me grew,

That love would temper every change,
And soften all surprise,
And, misty with the dreams of earth,
The hills of Heaven arise.

1873.

A SEA DREAM.

We saw the slow tides go and come,
The curving surf-lines lightly drawn,
The gray rocks touched with tender bloom
Beneath the fresh-blown rose of dawn.

We saw in richer sunsets lost
The sombre pomp of showery noons;
And signalled spectral sails that crossed
The weird, low light of rising moons.

On stormy eves from cliff and head
We saw the white spray tossed and spurned;
While over all, in gold and red,
Its face of fire the lighthouse turned.

The rail-car brought its daily crowds,
Half curious, half indifferent,
Like passing sails or floating clouds,
We saw them as they came and went.

But, one calm morning, as we lay
And watched the mirage-lifted wall
Of coast, across the dreamy bay,
And heard afar the curlew call,

And nearer voices, wild or tame,
Of airy flock and childish throng,
Up from the water's edge there came
Faint snatches of familiar song.

Careless we heard the singer's choice
Of old and common airs; at last
The tender pathos of his voice
In one low chanson held us fast.

A song that mingled joy and pain,
And memories old and sadly sweet;
While, timing to its minor strain,
The waves in lapsing cadence beat.

The waves are glad in breeze and sun;
The rocks are fringed with foam;
I walk once more a haunted shore,
A stranger, yet at home,
A land of dreams I roam.

Is this the wind, the soft sea-wind
That stirred thy locks of brown?
Are these the rocks whose mosses knew
The trail of thy light gown,
Where boy and girl sat down?

I see the gray fort's broken wall,[34]
The boats that rock below;
And, out at sea, the passing sails
We saw so long ago
Rose-red in morning's glow.

The freshness of the early time
On every breeze is blown;
As glad the sea, as blue the sky,—
The change is ours alone;
The saddest is my own.

A stranger now, a world-worn man,
Is he who bears my name;
But thou, methinks, whose mortal life
Immortal youth became,
Art evermore the same.

Thou art not here, thou art not there,
Thy place I cannot see;
I only know that where thou art
The blessed angels be,
And heaven is glad for thee.

Forgive me if the evil years
Have left on me their sign;
Wash out, O soul so beautiful,
The many stains of mine
In tears of love divine!

I could not look on thee and live,
If thou wert by my side;
The vision of a shining one,
The white and heavenly bride,
Is well to me denied.

But turn to me thy dear girl-face
Without the angel's crown,
The wedded roses of thy lips,
Thy loose hair rippling down
In waves of golden brown.

Look forth once more through space and time,
And let thy sweet shade fall
In tenderest grace of soul and form
On memory's frescoed wall,
A shadow, and yet all!

Draw near, more near, forever dear!
Where'er I rest or roam,
Or in the city's crowded streets,
Or by the blown sea foam,
The thought of thee is home!

At breakfast hour the singer read
The city news, with comment wise,
Like one who felt the pulse of trade
Beneath his finger fall and rise.

His look, his air, his curt speech, told
The man of action, not of books,
To whom the corners made in gold
And stocks were more than seaside nooks.

Of life beneath the life confessed
His song had hinted unawares;
Of flowers in traffic's ledgers pressed,
Of human hearts in bulls and bears.

But eyes in vain were turned to watch
That face so hard and shrewd and strong;
And ears in vain grew sharp to catch
The meaning of that morning song.

In vain some sweet-voiced querist sought
To sound him, leaving as she came;
Her baited album only caught
A common, unromantic name.

No word betrayed the mystery fine,
That trembled on the singer's tongue;
He came and went, and left no sign
Behind him save the song he sung.

1874.

HAZEL BLOSSOMS.

The summer warmth has left the sky,
The summer songs have died away;
And, withered, in the footpaths lie
The fallen leaves, but yesterday
With ruby and with topaz gay.

The grass is browning on the hills;
No pale, belated flowers recall
The astral fringes of the rills,
And drearily the dead vines fall,
Frost-blackened, from the roadside wall.

Yet through the gray and sombre wood,
Against the dusk of fir and pine,
Last of their floral sisterhood,
The hazel's yellow blossoms shine
The tawny gold of Afric's mine!

Small beauty hath my unsung flower,
For spring to own or summer hail;
But, in the season's saddest hour,
To skies that weep and winds that wail
Its glad surprisals never fail.

O days grown cold! O life grown old!
No rose of June may bloom again;
But, like the hazel's twisted gold,
Through early frost and latter rain
Shall hints of summer-time remain.

And as within the hazel's bough
A gift of mystic virtue dwells,
That points to golden ores below,
And in dry desert places tells
Where flow unseen the cool, sweet wells,—

So, in the wise Diviner's hand,
Be mine the hazel's grateful part
To feel, beneath a thirsty land,
The living waters thrill and start,
The beating of the rivulet's heart!

Sufficeth me the gift to light
With latest bloom the dark, cold days;
To call some hidden spring to sight
That, in these dry and dusty ways,
Shall sing its pleasant song of praise.

O Love! the hazel-wand may fail,
But thou canst lend the surer spell,
That, passing over Baca's vale,
Repeats the old-time miracle,
And makes the desert-land a well.

1874.

SUNSET ON THE BEARCAMP.

A GOLD fringe on the purpling hem
Of hills the river runs,
As down its long, green valley falls
The last of summer's suns.
Along its tawny gravel-bed
Broad-flowing, swift, and still,
As if its meadow levels felt
The hurry of the hill,
Noiseless between its banks of green
From curve to curve it slips;
The drowsy maple-shadows rest
Like fingers on its lips.

A waif from Carroll's wildest hills,
Unstoried and unknown;
The ursine legend of its name
Prowls on its banks alone.

Yet flowers as fair its slopes adorn
As ever Yarrow knew,
Or, under rainy Irish skies,
By Spenser's Mulla grew;
And through the gaps of leaning trees
Its mountain cradle shows:
The gold against the amethyst,
The green against the rose.

Touched by a light that hath no name,
A glory never sung,
Aloft on sky and mountain wall
Are God's great pictures hung.
How changed the summits vast and old!
No longer granite-browed,
They melt in rosy mist; the rock
Is softer than the cloud;
The valley holds its breath; no leaf
Of all its elms is twirled:
The silence of eternity
Seems falling on the world.

The pause before the breaking seals
Of mystery is this;
Yon miracle-play of night and day
Makes dumb its witnesses.
What unseen altar crowns the hills
That reach up stair on stair?
What eyes look through, what white wings fan
These purple veils of air?
What Presence from the heavenly heights
To those of earth stoops down?
Not vainly Hellas dreamed of gods
On Ida's snowy crown!

Slow fades the vision of the sky,
The golden water pales,
And over all the valley-land
A gray-winged vapor sails.
I go the common way of all;
The sunset fires will burn,
The flowers will blow, the river flow,
When I no more return.
No whisper from the mountain pine
Nor lapsing stream shall tell
The stranger, treading where I tread,
Of him who loved them well.

But beauty seen is never lost,
God's colors all are fast;
The glory of this sunset heaven
Into my soul has passed,

A sense of gladness unconfined
To mortal date or clime;
As the soul liveth, it shall live
Beyond the years of time.
Beside the mystic asphodels
Shall bloom the home-born flowers,
And new horizons flush and glow
With sunset hues of ours.

Farewell! these smiling hills must wear
Too soon their wintry frown,
And snow-cold winds from off them shake
The maple's red leaves down.
But I shall see a summer sun
Still setting broad and low;
The mountain slopes shall blush and bloom,
The golden water flow.
A lover's claim is mine on all
I see to have and hold,—
The rose-light of perpetual hills,
And sunsets never cold!

1876.

THE SEEKING OF THE WATERFALL.

They left their home of summer ease
Beneath the lowland's sheltering trees,
To seek, by ways unknown to all,
The promise of the waterfall.

Some vague, faint rumor to the vale
Had crept—perchance a hunter's tale—
Of its wild mirth of waters lost
On the dark woods through which it tossed.

Somewhere it laughed and sang; somewhere
Whirled in mad dance its misty hair;
But who had raised its veil, or seen
The rainbow skirts of that Undine?

They sought it where the mountain brook
Its swift way to the valley took;
Along the rugged slope they clomb,
Their guide a thread of sound and foam.

Height after height they slowly won:
The fiery javelins of the sun
Smote the bare ledge; the tangled shade
With rock and vine their steps delayed.

But, through leaf-openings, now and then
They saw the cheerful homes of men,
And the great mountains with their wall
Of misty purple girdling all.

The leaves through which the glad winds blew
Shared the wild dance the waters knew;
And where the shadows deepest fell
The wood-thrush rang his silver bell.

Fringing the stream, at every turn
Swung low the waving fronds of fern;
From stony cleft and mossy sod
Pale asters sprang, and golden-rod.

And still the water sang the sweet,
Glad song that stirred its gliding feet,
And found in rock and root the keys
Of its beguiling melodies.

Beyond, above, its signals flew
Of tossing foam the birch-trees through;
Now seen, now lost, but baffling still
The weary seekers' slackening will.

Each called to each: 'Lo here! Lo there!
Its white scarf flutters in the air!'
They climbed anew; the vision fled,
To beckon higher overhead.

So toiled they up the mountain-slope
With faint and ever fainter hope;
With faint and fainter voice the brook
Still bade them listen, pause, and look.

Meanwhile below the day was done;
Above the tall peaks saw the sun
Sink, beam-shorn, to its misty set
Behind the hills of violet.

'Here ends our quest!' the seekers cried,
'The brook and rumor both have lied!
The phantom of a waterfall
Has led us at its beck and call.'

But one, with years grown wiser, said:
'So, always baffled, not misled,
We follow where before us runs
The vision of the shining ones.

'Not where they seem their signals fly,
Their voices while we listen die;
We cannot keep, however fleet,
The quick time of their winged feet.

'From youth to age unresting stray
These kindly mockers in our way;
Yet lead they not, the baffling elves,
To something better than themselves?

'Here, though unreached the goal we sought,
Its own reward our toil has brought:
The winding water's sounding rush,
The long note of the hermit thrush,

'The turquoise lakes, the glimpse of pond
And river track, and, vast, beyond
Broad meadows belted round with pines,
The grand uplift of mountain lines!

'What matter though we seek with pain
The garden of the gods in vain,
If lured thereby we climb to greet
Some wayside blossom Eden-sweet?

'To seek is better than to gain,
The fond hope dies as we attain;
Life's fairest things are those which seem,
The best is that of which we dream.

'Then let us trust our waterfall
Still flashes down its rocky wall,
With rainbow crescent curved across
Its sunlit spray from moss to moss.

'And we, forgetful of our pain,
In thought shall seek it oft again;
Shall see this aster-blossomed sod,
This sunshine of the golden-rod,

'And haply gain, through parting boughs,
Grand glimpses of great mountain brows
Cloud-turbaned, and the sharp steel sheen
Of lakes deep set in valleys green.

'So failure wins; the consequence
Of loss becomes its recompense;
And evermore the end shall tell
The unreached ideal guided well.

'Our sweet illusions only die
Fulfilling love's sure prophecy;
And every wish for better things
An undreamed beauty nearer brings.

'For fate is servitor of love;
Desire and hope and longing prove
The secret of immortal youth,
And Nature cheats us into truth.

'O kind allurers, wisely sent,
Beguiling with benign intent,
Still move us, through divine unrest,
To seek the loveliest and the best!

'Go with us when our souls go free,
And, in the clear, white light to be,
Add unto Heaven's beatitude
The old delight of seeking good!'

1878.

THE TRAILING ARBUTUS.

I WANDERED lonely where the pine-trees made
Against the bitter East their barricade,
And, guided by its sweet
Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell,
The trailing spring flower tinted like a shell
Amid dry leaves and mosses at my feet.

From under dead boughs, for whose loss the pines
Moaned ceaseless overhead, the blossoming vines
Lifted their glad surprise,
While yet the bluebird smoothed in leafless trees
His feathers ruffled by the chill sea-breeze,
And snow-drifts lingered under April skies.

As, pausing, o'er the lonely flower I bent,
I thought of lives thus lowly, clogged and pent,
Which yet find room,
Through care and cumber, coldness and decay,
To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day,
And make the sad earth happier for their bloom.

1879.

ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER.

This name in some parts of Europe is given to the season we call Indian Summer, in honor of the good St. Martin. The title of the poem was suggested by the fact that the day it refers to was the exact date of that set apart to the Saint, the 11th of November.

THOUGH flowers have perished at the touch
Of Frost, the early comer,
I hail the season loved so much,
The good St. Martin's summer.

O gracious morn, with rose-red dawn,
And thin moon curving o'er it!
The old year's darling, latest born,
More loved than all before it!

How flamed the sunrise through the pines!
How stretched the birchen shadows,
Braiding in long, wind-wavered lines
The westward sloping meadows!

The sweet day, opening as a flower
Unfolds its petals tender,
Renews for us at noontide's hour
The summer's tempered splendor.

The birds are hushed; alone the wind,
That through the woodland searches,
The red-oak's lingering leaves can find,
And yellow plumes of larches.

But still the balsam-breathing pine
Invites no thought of sorrow,
No hint of loss from air like wine
The earth's content can borrow.

The summer and the winter here
Midway a truce are holding,
A soft, consenting atmosphere
Their tents of peace enfolding.

The silent woods, the lonely hills,
Rise solemn in their gladness;
The quiet that the valley fills
Is scarcely joy or sadness.

How strange! The autumn yesterday
In winter's grasp seemed dying;
On whirling winds from skies of gray
The early snow was flying.

And now, while over Nature's mood
There steals a soft relenting,
I will not mar the present good,
Forecasting or lamenting.

My autumn time and Nature's hold
A dreamy tryst together,
And, both grown old, about us fold
The golden-tissued weather.

I lean my heart against the day
To feel its bland caressing;
I will not let it pass away
Before it leaves its blessing.

God's angels come not as of old
The Syrian shepherds knew them;
In reddening dawns, in sunset gold,
And warm noon lights I view them.

Nor need there is, in times like this
When heaven to earth draws nearer,
Of wing or song as witnesses
To make their presence clearer.

O stream of life, whose swifter flow
Is of the end forewarning,
Methinks thy sundown afterglow
Seems less of night than morning!

Old cares grow light; aside I lay
The doubts and fears that troubled;
The quiet of the happy day
Within my soul is doubled.

That clouds must veil this fair sunshine
Not less a joy I find it;
Nor less yon warm horizon line
That winter lurks behind it.

The mystery of the untried days
I close my eyes from reading;
His will be done whose darkest ways
To light and life are leading!

Less drear the winter night shall be,
If memory cheer and hearten
Its heavy hours with thoughts of thee,
Sweet summer of St. Martin!

1880.

STORM ON LAKE ASQUAM.

A CLOUD, like that the old-time Hebrew saw
On Carmel prophesying rain, began
To lift itself o'er wooded Cardigan,
Growing and blackening. Suddenly, a flaw

Of chill wind menaced; then a strong blast beat
Down the long valley's murmuring pines, and woke
The noon-dream of the sleeping lake, and broke
Its smooth steel mirror at the mountains' feet.

Thunderous and vast, a fire-veined darkness swept
Over the rough pine-bearded Asquam range;
A wraith of tempest, wonderful and strange,
From peak to peak the cloudy giant stepped.

One moment, as if challenging the storm,
Chocorua's tall, defiant sentinel
Looked from his watch-tower; then the shadow fell,
And the wild rain-drift blotted out his form.

And over all the still unhidden sun,
Weaving its light through slant-blown veils of rain,
Smiled on the trouble, as hope smiles on pain;
And, when the tumult and the strife were done,

With one foot on the lake and one on land,
Framing within his crescent's tinted streak
A far-off picture of the Melvin peak,
Spent broken clouds the rainbow's angel spanned.

1882.

A SUMMER PILGRIMAGE.

To kneel before some saintly shrine,
To breathe the health of airs divine,
Or bathe where sacred rivers flow,
The cowled and turbaned pilgrims go.
I too, a palmer, take, as they
With staff and scallop-shell, my way
To feel, from burdening cares and ills,
The strong uplifting of the hills.

The years are many since, at first,
For dreamed-of wonders all athirst,
I saw on Winnipesaukee fall
The shadow of the mountain wall.
Ah! where are they who sailed with me
The beautiful island-studded sea?
And am I he whose keen surprise
Flashed out from such unclouded eyes?

Still, when the sun of summer burns,
My longing for the hills returns;
And northward, leaving at my back
The warm vale of the Merrimac,
I go to meet the winds of morn,
Blown down the hill-gaps, mountain-born,
Breathe scent of pines, and satisfy
The hunger of a lowland eye.

Again I see the day decline
Along a ridged horizon line;
Touching the hill-tops, as a nun
Her beaded rosary, sinks the sun.
One lake lies golden, which shall soon
Be silver in the rising moon;
And one, the crimson of the skies
And mountain purple multiplies.

With the untroubled quiet blends
The distance-softened voice of friends;
The girl's light laugh no discord brings
To the low song the pine-tree sings;
And, not unwelcome, comes the hail
Of boyhood from his nearing sail.
The human presence breaks no spell,
And sunset still is miracle!

Calm as the hour, methinks I feel
A sense of worship o'er me steal;
Not that of satyr-charming Pan,
No cult of Nature shaming man,

Not Beauty's self, but that which lives
And shines through all the veils it weaves,—
Soul of the mountain, lake, and wood,
Their witness to the Eternal Good!

And if, by fond illusion, here
The earth to heaven seems drawing near,
And yon outlying range invites
To other and serener heights,
Scarce hid behind its topmost swell,
The shining Mounts Delectable!
A dream may hint of truth no less
Than the sharp light of wakefulness.

As through her vale of incense smoke
Of old the spell-rapt priestess spoke,
More than her heathen oracle,
May not this trance of sunset tell
That Nature's forms of loveliness
Their heavenly archetypes confess,
Fashioned like Israel's ark alone
From patterns in the Mount made known?

A holier beauty overbroods
These fair and faint similitudes;
Yet not unblest is he who sees
Shadows of God's realities,
And knows beyond this masquerade
Of shape and color, light and shade,
And dawn and set, and wax and wane,
Eternal verities remain.

O gems of sapphire, granite set!
O hills that charmed horizons fret!
I know how fair your morns can break,
In rosy light on isle and lake;
How over wooded slopes can run
The noonday play of cloud and sun,
And evening droop her oriflamme
Of gold and red in still Asquam.

The summer moons may round again,
And careless feet these hills profane;
These sunsets waste on vacant eyes
The lavish splendor of the skies;
Fashion and folly, misplaced here,
Sigh for their natural atmosphere,
And travelled pride the outlook scorn
Of lesser heights than Matterhorn:

But let me dream that hill and sky
Of unseen beauty prophesy;
And in these tinted lakes behold
The trailing of the raiment fold
Of that which, still eluding gaze,
Allures to upward-tending ways,
Whose footprints make, wherever found,
Our common earth a holy ground.

1883.

SWEET FERN.

The subtle power in perfume found
Nor priest nor sibyl vainly learned;
On Grecian shrine or Aztec mound
No censer idly burned.

That power the old-time worships knew,
The Corybantes' frenzied dance,
The Pythian priestess swooning through
The wonderland of trance.

And Nature holds, in wood and field,
Her thousand sunlit censers still;
To spells of flower and shrub we yield
Against or with our will.

I climbed a hill path strange and new
With slow feet, pausing at each turn;
A sudden waft of west wind blew
The breath of the sweet fern.

That fragrance from my vision swept
The alien landscape; in its stead,
Up fairer hills of youth I stepped,
As light of heart as tread.

I saw my boyhood's lakelet shine
Once more through rifts of woodland shade;
I knew my river's winding line
By morning mist betrayed.

With me June's freshness, lapsing brook,
Murmurs of leaf and bee, the call
Of birds, and one in voice and look
In keeping with them all.

A fern beside the way we went
She plucked, and, smiling, held it up,
While from her hand the wild, sweet scent
I drank as from a cup.

O potent witchery of smell!
The dust-dry leaves to life return,
And she who plucked them owns the spell
And lifts her ghostly fern.

Or sense or spirit? Who shall say
What touch the chord of memory thrills?
It passed, and left the August day
Ablaze on lonely hills.

1884.

THE WOOD GIANT.

[Written at Sturtevant's Farm, about a mile from Centre Harbor, N.H.]

From Alton Bay to Sandwich Dome,
From Mad to Saco river,
For patriarchs of the primal wood
We sought with vain endeavor.

And then we said: 'The giants old
Are lost beyond retrieval;
This pygmy growth the axe has spared
Is not the wood primeval.

'Look where we will o'er vale and hill,
How idle are our searches
For broad-girthed maples, wide-limbed oaks,
Centennial pines and birches!

'Their tortured limbs the axe and saw
Have changed to beams and trestles;
They rest in walls, they float on seas,
They rot in sunken vessels.

'This shorn and wasted mountain land
Of underbrush and boulder,—
Who thinks to see its full-grown tree
Must live a century older.'

At last to us a woodland path,
To open sunset leading,
Revealed the Anakim of pines
Our wildest wish exceeding.

Alone, the level sun before;
Below, the lake's green islands;
Beyond, in misty distance dim,
The rugged Northern Highlands.

Dark Titan on his Sunset Hill
Of time and change defiant!
How dwarfed the common woodland seemed,
Before the old-time giant!

What marvel that, in simpler days
Of the world's early childhood,
Men crowned with garlands, gifts, and praise
Such monarchs of the wild-wood?

That Tyrian maids with flower and song
Danced through the hill grove's spaces,
And hoary-bearded Druids found
In woods their holy places?

With somewhat of that Pagan awe
With Christian reverence blending,
We saw our pine-tree's mighty arms
Above our heads extending.

We heard his needles' mystic rune,
Now rising, and now dying,
As erst Dodona's priestess heard
The oak leaves prophesying.

Was it the half-unconscious moan
Of one apart and mateless,
The weariness of unshared power,
The loneliness of greatness?

O dawns and sunsets, lend to him
Your beauty and your wonder!
Blithe sparrow, sing thy summer song
His solemn shadow under!

Play lightly on his slender keys,
O wind of summer, waking
For hills like these the sound of seas
On far-off beaches breaking!

And let the eagle and the crow
Find shelter in his branches,
When winds shake down his winter snow
In silver avalanches.

The brave are braver for their cheer,
The strongest need assurance,
The sigh of longing makes not less
The lesson of endurance.

1885.

A DAY.

Talk not of sad November, when a day
  Of warm, glad sunshine fills the sky of noon,
  And a wind, borrowed from some morn of June,
Stirs the brown grasses and the leafless spray.

On the unfrosted pool the pillared pines
  Lay their long shafts of shadow: the small rill,
  Singing a pleasant song of summer still,
A line of silver, down the hill-slope shines.

Hushed the bird-voices and the hum of bees,
  In the thin grass the crickets pipe no more;
  But still the squirrel hoards his winter store,
And drops his nut-shells from the shagbark trees.

Softly the dark green hemlocks whisper: high
  Above, the spires of yellowing larches show,
  Where the woodpecker and home-loving crow
And jay and nut-hatch winter's threat defy.

O gracious beauty, ever new and old!
  O sights and sounds of nature, doubly dear
  When the low sunshine warns the closing year
Of snow-blown fields and waves of Arctic cold!

Close to my heart I fold each lovely thing
  The sweet day yields; and, not disconsolate,
  With the calm patience of the woods I wait
For leaf and blossom when God gives us Spring!

29th, 11th mo., 1886.

Personal Poems

A LAMENT.

'The parted spirit,
Knoweth it not our sorrow? Answereth not
Its blessing to our tears?'

THE circle is broken, one seat is forsaken,
One bud from the tree of our friendship is shaken;
One heart from among us no longer shall thrill
With joy in our gladness, or grief in our ill.

Weep! lonely and lowly are slumbering now
The light of her glances, the pride of her brow;
Weep! sadly and long shall we listen in vain
To hear the soft tones of her welcome again.

Give our tears to the dead! For humanity's claim
From its silence and darkness is ever the same;
The hope of that world whose existence is bliss
May not stifle the tears of the mourners of this.

For, oh! if one glance the freed spirit can throw
On the scene of its troubled probation below,
Than the pride of the marble, the pomp of the dead,
To that glance will be dearer the tears which we shed.

Oh, who can forget the mild light of her smile,
Over lips moved with music and feeling the while,
The eye's deep enchantment, dark, dream-like, and clear,
In the glow of its gladness, the shade of its tear.

And the charm of her features, while over the whole
Played the hues of the heart and the sunshine of soul;
And the tones of her voice, like the music which seems
Murmured low in our ears by the Angel of dreams!

But holier and dearer our memories hold
Those treasures of feeling, more precious than gold,
The love and the kindness and pity which gave
Fresh flowers for the bridal, green wreaths for the grave!

The heart ever open to Charity's claim,
Unmoved from its purpose by censure and blame,
While vainly alike on her eye and her ear
Fell the scorn of the heartless, the jesting and jeer.

How true to our hearts was that beautiful sleeper!
With smiles for the joyful, with tears for the weeper!
Yet, evermore prompt, whether mournful or gay,
With warnings in love to the passing astray.

For, though spotless herself, she could
sorrow for them
Who sullied with evil the spirit's pure
gem;
And a sigh or a tear could the erring
reprove,
And the sting of reproof was still tempered
by love.

As a cloud of the sunset, slow melting in
heaven,
As a star that is lost when the daylight
is given,
As a glad dream of slumber, which wakens
in bliss,
She hath passed to the world of the holy
from this.

1834.

TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES B. STORRS,

Late President of Western Reserve College, who died at his post of duty, overworn by his strenuous labors with tongue and pen in the cause of Human Freedom.

Thou hast fallen in thine armor,
Thou martyr of the Lord!
With thy last breath crying 'Onward!'
And thy hand upon the sword.
The haughty heart derideth,
And the sinful lip reviles,
But the blessing of the perishing
Around thy pillow smiles!

When to our cup of trembling
The added drop is given,
And the long-suspended thunder
Falls terribly from Heaven,—
When a new and fearful freedom
Is proffered of the Lord
To the slow-consuming Famine,
The Pestilence and Sword!

When the refuges of Falsehood
Shall be swept away in wrath,
And the temple shall be shaken,
With its idol, to the earth,
Shall not thy words of warning
Be all remembered then?
And thy now unheeded message
Burn in the hearts of men?

Oppression's hand may scatter
Its nettles on thy tomb,
And even Christian bosoms
Deny thy memory room;
For lying lips shall torture
Thy mercy into crime,
And the slanderer shall flourish
As the bay-tree for a time.

But where the south-wind lingers
On Carolina's pines,
Or falls the careless sunbeam
Down Georgia's golden mines;
Where now beneath his burthen
The toiling slave is driven;
Where now a tyrant's mockery
Is offered unto Heaven;

Where Mammon hath its altars
Wet o'er with human blood,
And pride and lust debases
The workmanship of God,—
There shall thy praise be spoken,
Redeemed from Falsehood's ban,
When the fetters shall be broken,
And the slave shall be a man!

Joy to thy spirit, brother!
A thousand hearts are warm,
A thousand kindred bosoms
Are baring to the storm.
What though red-handed Violence
With secret Fraud combine?
The wall of fire is round us,
Our Present Help was thine.

Lo, the waking up of nations,
From Slavery's fatal sleep;
The murmur of a Universe,
Deep calling unto Deep!
Joy to thy spirit, brother!
On every wind of heaven
The onward cheer and summons
Of Freedom's voice is given!

Glory to God forever!
Beyond the despot's will
The soul of Freedom liveth
Imperishable still.
The words which thou hast uttered
Are of that soul a part,
And the good seed thou hast scattered
Is springing from the heart.

In the evil days before us,
And the trials yet to come,
In the shadow of the prison,
Or the cruel martyrdom,—
We will think of thee, O brother!
And thy sainted name shall be
In the blessing of the captive,
And the anthem of the free.

1834.

LINES

ON THE DEATH OF S. OLIVER TORREY, SECRETARY OF THE BOSTON YOUNG MEN'S ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

Gone before us, O our brother,
To the spirit-land!
Vainly look we for another
In thy place to stand.
Who shall offer youth and beauty
On the wasting shrine
Of a stern and lofty duty,
With a faith like thine?

Oh, thy gentle smile of greeting
Who again shall see?
Who amidst the solemn meeting
Gaze again on thee?
Who when peril gathers o'er us,
Wear so calm a brow?
Who, with evil men before us,
So serene as thou?

Early hath the spoiler found thee,
Brother of our love!
Autumn's faded earth around thee,
And its storms above!
Evermore that turf lie lightly,
And, with future showers,
O'er thy slumbers fresh and brightly
Blow the summer flowers!

In the locks thy forehead gracing,
Not a silvery streak;
Nor a line of sorrow's tracing
On thy fair young cheek;
Eyes of light and lips of roses,
Such as Hylas wore,—
Over all that curtain closes,
Which shall rise no more!

Will the vigil Love is keeping
Round that grave of thine,
Mournfully, like Jazer weeping
Over Sibmah's vine;[35]
Will the pleasant memories, swelling
Gentle hearts, of thee,
In the spirit's distant dwelling
All unheeded be?

If the spirit ever gazes,
From its journeyings, back;
If the immortal ever traces
O'er its mortal track;
Wilt thou not, O brother, meet us
Sometimes on our way,
And, in hours of sadness, greet us
As a spirit may?

Peace be with thee, O our brother,
In the spirit-land!
Vainly look we for another
In thy place to stand.
Unto Truth and Freedom giving
All thy early powers,
Be thy virtues with the living,
And thy spirit ours!

1837.

TO ——,

WITH A COPY OF WOOLMAN'S JOURNAL.

'Get the writings of John Woolman by heart.'
Essays of Elia.

Maiden! with the fair brown tresses
Shading o'er thy dreamy eye,
Floating on thy thoughtful forehead
Cloud wreaths of its sky.

Youthful years and maiden beauty,
Joy with them should still abide,—
Instinct take the place of Duty,
Love, not Reason, guide.

Ever in the New rejoicing,
Kindly beckoning back the Old,
Turning, with the gift of Midas,
All things into gold.

And the passing shades of sadness
Wearing even a welcome guise,
As, when some bright lake lies open
To the sunny skies,

Every wing of bird above it,
Every light cloud floating on,
Glitters like that flashing mirror
In the self-same sun.

But upon thy youthful forehead
Something like a shadow lies;
And a serious soul is looking
From thy earnest eyes.

With an early introversion,
Through the forms of outward things,
Seeking for the subtle essence,
And the hidden springs.

Deeper than the gilded surface
Hath thy wakeful vision seen,
Farther than the narrow present
Have thy journeyings been.

Thou hast midst Life's empty noises
Heard the solemn steps of Time,
And the low mysterious voices
Of another clime.

All the mystery of Being
Hath upon thy spirit pressed,—
Thoughts which, like the Deluge wanderer,
Find no place of rest:

That which mystic Plato pondered,
That which Zeno heard with awe,
And the star-rapt Zoroaster
In his night-watch saw.

From the doubt and darkness springing
Of the dim, uncertain Past,
Moving to the dark still shadows
O'er the Future cast.

Early hath Life's mighty question
Thrilled within thy heart of youth,
With a deep and strong beseeching:
What and where is Truth?

Hollow creed and ceremonial,
Whence the ancient life hath fled,
Idle faith unknown to action,
Dull and cold and dead.

Oracles, whose wire-worked meanings
Only wake a quiet scorn,—
Not from these thy seeking spirit
Hath its answer drawn.

But, like some tired child at even,
On thy mother Nature's breast,
Thou, methinks, art vainly seeking
Truth, and peace, and rest.

O'er that mother's rugged features
Thou art throwing Fancy's veil,
Light and soft as woven moonbeams,
Beautiful and frail!

O'er the rough chart of Existence,
Rocks of sin and wastes of woe,
Soft airs breathe, and green leaves tremble,
And cool fountains flow.

And to thee an answer cometh
From the earth and from the sky,
And to thee the hills and waters
And the stars reply.

But a soul-sufficing answer
Hath no outward origin;
More than Nature's many voices
May be heard within.

Even as the great Augustine
Questioned earth and sea and sky,[36]
And the dusty tomes of learning
And old poesy.

But his earnest spirit needed
More than outward Nature taught;
More than blest the poet's vision
Or the sage's thought.

Only in the gathered silence
Of a calm and waiting frame,
Light and wisdom as from Heaven
To the seeker came.

Not to ease and aimless quiet
Doth that inward answer tend,
But to works of love and duty
As our being's end;

Not to idle dreams and trances,
Length of face, and solemn tone,
But to Faith, in daily striving
And performance shown.

Earnest toil and strong endeavor
Of a spirit which within
Wrestles with familiar evil
And besetting sin;

And without, with tireless vigor,
Steady heart, and weapon strong,
In the power of truth assailing
Every form of wrong.

Guided thus, how passing lovely
Is the track of Woolman's feet!
And his brief and simple record
How serenely sweet!

O'er life's humblest duties throwing
Light the earthling never knew,
Freshening all its dark waste places
As with Hermon's dew.

All which glows in Pascal's pages,
All which sainted Guion sought,
Or the blue-eyed German Rahel
Half-unconscious taught:

Beauty, such as Goethe pictured,
Such as Shelley dreamed of, shed
Living warmth and starry brightness
Round that poor man's head.

Not a vain and cold ideal,
Not a poet's dream alone,
But a presence warm and real,
Seen and felt and known.

When the red right-hand of slaughter
Moulders with the steel it swung,
When the name of seer and poet
Dies on Memory's tongue,

All bright thoughts and pure shall gather
Round that meek and suffering one,—
Glorious, like the seer-seen angel
Standing in the sun!

Take the good man's book and ponder
What its pages say to thee;
Blessed as the hand of healing
May its lesson be.

If it only serves to strengthen
Yearnings for a higher good,
For the fount of living waters
And diviner food;

If the pride of human reason
Feels its meek and still rebuke,
Quailing like the eye of Peter
From the Just One's look!

If with readier ear thou heedest
What the Inward Teacher saith,
Listening with a willing spirit
And a childlike faith,—

Thou mayst live to bless the giver,
Who, himself but frail and weak,
Would at least the highest welfare
Of another seek;

And his gift, though poor and lowly
It may seem to other eyes,
Yet may prove an angel holy
In a pilgrim's guise.

1840.

LEGGETT'S MONUMENT.

William Leggett, who died in 1839 at the age of thirty-seven, was the intrepid editor of the *New York Evening Post* and afterwards of *The Plain Dealer*. His vigorous assault upon the system of slavery brought down upon him the enmity of political defenders of the system.

'Ye build the tombs of the prophets.'
Holy Writ.

Yes, pile the marble o'er him! It is well
That ye who mocked him in his long stern strife,
And planted in the pathway of his life

The ploughshares of your hatred hot from hell,
Who clamored down the bold reformer when
He pleaded for his captive fellow-men,
Who spurned him in the market-place, and sought
Within thy walls, St. Tammany, to bind
In party chains the free and honest thought,
The angel utterance of an upright mind,
Well is it now that o'er his grave ye raise
The stony tribute of your tardy praise,
For not alone that pile shall tell to Fame
Of the brave heart beneath, but of the builders' shame!

1841.

TO A FRIEND,

ON HER RETURN FROM EUROPE.[37]

How smiled the land of France
Under thy blue eye's glance,
Light-hearted rover!
Old walls of chateaux gray,
Towers of an early day,
Which the Three Colors play
Flauntingly over.

Now midst the brilliant train
Thronging the banks of Seine:
Now midst the splendor
Of the wild Alpine range,
Waking with change on change
Thoughts in thy young heart strange,
Lovely, and tender.

Vales, soft Elysian,
Like those in the vision
Of Mirza, when, dreaming,
He saw the long hollow dell,
Touched by the prophet's spell,
Into an ocean swell
With its isles teeming.

Cliffs wrapped in snows of years,
Splintering with icy spears
Autumn's blue heaven:
Loose rock and frozen slide,
Hung on the mountain-side,
Waiting their hour to glide
Downward, storm-driven!

Rhine-stream, by castle old,
Baron's and robber's hold,
Peacefully flowing;
Sweeping through vineyards green,
Or where the cliffs are seen
O'er the broad wave between
Grim shadows throwing.

Or, where St. Peter's dome
Swells o'er eternal Rome,
Vast, dim, and solemn;
Hymns ever chanting low,
Censers swung to and fro,
Sable stoles sweeping slow
Cornice and column!

Oh, as from each and all
Will there not voices call
Evermore back again?
In the mind's gallery
Wilt thou not always see
Dim phantoms beckon thee
O'er that old track again?

New forms thy presence haunt,
New voices softly chant,
New faces greet thee!
Pilgrims from many a shrine
Hallowed by poet's line,
At memory's magic sign,
Rising to meet thee.

And when such visions come
Unto thy olden home,
Will they not waken
Deep thoughts of Him whose hand
Led thee o'er sea and land
Back to the household band
Whence thou wast taken?

While, at the sunset time,
Swells the cathedral's chime,
Yet, in thy dreaming,
While to thy spirit's eye
Yet the vast mountains lie
Piled in the Switzer's sky,
Icy and gleaming:

Prompter of silent prayer,
Be the wild picture there
In the mind's chamber,
And, through each coming day
Him who, as staff and stay,
Watched o'er thy wandering way,
Freshly remember.

So, when the call shall be
Soon or late unto thee,
As to all given,
Still may that picture live,
All its fair forms survive,
And to thy spirit give
Gladness in Heaven!

1841.

LUCY HOOPER.

Lucy Hooper died at Brooklyn, L. I., on the 1st of 8th mo., 1841, aged twenty-four years.[38]

They tell me, Lucy, thou art dead,
That all of thee we loved and cherished
Has with thy summer roses perished;
And left, as its young beauty fled,
An ashen memory in its stead,
The twilight of a parted day
Whose fading light is cold and vain,
The heart's faint echo of a strain
Of low, sweet music passed away.
That true and loving heart, that gift
Of a mind, earnest, clear, profound,
Bestowing, with a glad unthrift,
Its sunny light on all around,
Affinities which only could
Cleave to the pure, the true, and good;
And sympathies which found no rest,
Save with the loveliest and best.
Of them—of thee—remains there naught
But sorrow in the mourner's breast?
A shadow in the land of thought?
No! Even my weak and trembling faith
Can lift for thee the veil which doubt
And human fear have drawn about
The all-awaiting scene of death.

Even as thou wast I see thee still;
And, save the absence of all ill
And pain and weariness, which here
Summoned the sigh or wrung the tear,
The same as when, two summers back,
Beside our childhood's Merrimac,
I saw thy dark eye wander o'er
Stream, sunny upland, rocky shore,
And heard thy low, soft voice alone
Midst lapse of waters, and the tone
Of pine-leaves by the west-wind blown,
There's not a charm of soul or brow,
Of all we knew and loved in thee,
But lives in holier beauty now,
Baptized in immortality!
Not mine the sad and freezing dream
Of souls that, with their earthly mould,
Cast off the loves and joys of old,
Unbodied, like a pale moonbeam,
As pure, as passionless, and cold;
Nor mine the hope of Indra's son,
Of slumbering in oblivion's rest,
Life's myriads blending into one,
In blank annihilation blest;
Dust-atoms of the infinite,
Sparks scattered from the central light,
And winning back through mortal pain
Their old unconsciousness again.
No! I have friends in Spirit Land,
Not shadows in a shadowy band,
Not others, but themselves are they.
And still I think of them the same
As when the Master's summons came;
Their change,—the holy morn-light breaking
Upon the dream-worn sleeper, waking,—
A change from twilight into day.

They've laid thee midst the household graves,
Where father, brother, sister lie;
Below thee sweep the dark blue waves,
Above thee bends the summer sky.
Thy own loved church in sadness read
Her solemn ritual o'er thy head,
And blessed and hallowed with her prayer
The turf laid lightly o'er thee there.
That church, whose rites and liturgy,
Sublime and old, were truth to thee,
Undoubted to thy bosom taken,
As symbols of a faith unshaken.
Even I, of simpler views, could feel
The beauty of thy trust and zeal;
And, owning not thy creed, could see
How deep a truth it seemed to thee,

And how thy fervent heart had thrown
O'er all, a coloring of its own,
And kindled up, intense and warm,
A life in every rite and form,
As, when on Chebar's banks of old,
The Hebrew's gorgeous vision rolled,
A spirit filled the vast machine,
A life 'within the wheels' was seen.

Farewell! A little time, and we
Who knew thee well, and loved thee here,
One after one shall follow thee
As pilgrims through the gate of fear,
Which opens on eternity.
Yet shall we cherish not the less
All that is left our hearts meanwhile;
The memory of thy loveliness
Shall round our weary pathway smile,
Like moonlight when the sun has set,
A sweet and tender radiance yet.
Thoughts of thy clear-eyed sense of duty,
Thy generous scorn of all things wrong,
The truth, the strength, the graceful beauty
Which blended in thy song.
All lovely things, by thee beloved,
Shall whisper to our hearts of thee;
These green hills, where thy childhood roved,
Yon river winding to the sea,
The sunset light of autumn eves
Reflecting on the deep, still floods,
Cloud, crimson sky, and trembling leaves
Of rainbow-tinted woods,
These, in our view, shall henceforth take
A tenderer meaning for thy sake;
And all thou lovedst of earth and sky
Seem sacred to thy memory.

1841.

FOLLEN.

ON READING HIS ESSAY ON THE 'FUTURE STATE.'

Charles Follen, one of the noblest contributions of Germany to American citizenship, was at an early age driven from his professorship in the University of Jena, and compelled to seek shelter from official prosecution in Switzerland, on account of his liberal political opinions. He became Professor of Civil Law in the University of Basle. The governments of Prussia, Austria, and Russia united in demanding his delivery as a political offender; and, in consequence, he left Switzerland, and came to the United States. At the time of the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society he was a Professor in Harvard University, honored for his genius, learning, and estimable character. His love of liberty and hatred of oppression led him to seek an interview with Garrison and express his sympathy with him. Soon after, he attended a meeting of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. An able speech was made by Rev. A. A. Phelps, and a letter of mine addressed to the Secretary of the Society was read. Whereupon he rose and stated that his views were in unison with those of the Society, and that after hearing the speech and the letter, he was ready to join it, and abide the probable consequences of such an unpopular act. He lost by so doing his professorship. He was an able member of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He perished in the ill-fated steamer Lexington, which was burned on its passage from New York, January 13, 1840. The few writings left behind him show him to have been a profound thinker of rare spiritual insight.

FRIEND of my soul! as with moist eye
I look up from this page of thine,
Is it a dream that thou art nigh,
Thy mild face gazing into mine?

That presence seems before me now,
A placid heaven of sweet moonrise,
When, dew-like, on the earth below
Descends the quiet of the skies.

The calm brow through the parted hair,
The gentle lips which knew no guile,
Softening the blue eye's thoughtful care
With the bland beauty of their smile.

Ah me! at times that last dread scene
Of Frost and Fire and moaning Sea
Will cast its shade of doubt between
The failing eyes of Faith and thee.

Yet, lingering o'er thy charmëd page,
Where through the twilight air of earth,
Alike enthusiast and sage,
Prophet and bard, thou gazest forth,

Lifting the Future's solemn veil;
The reaching of a mortal hand
To put aside the cold and pale
Cloud-curtains of the Unseen Land;

In thoughts which answer to my own,
In words which reach my inward ear,
Like whispers from the void Unknown,
I feel thy living presence here.

The waves which lull thy body's rest,
The dust thy pilgrim footsteps trod,
Unwasted, through each change, attest
The fixed economy of God.

Shall these poor elements outlive
The mind whose kingly will they wrought?
Their gross unconsciousness survive
Thy godlike energy of thought?

Thou livest, Follen! not in vain
Hath thy fine spirit meekly borne
The burthen of Life's cross of pain,
And the thorned crown of suffering worn.

Oh, while Life's solemn mystery glooms
Around us like a dungeon's wall,
Silent earth's pale and crowded tombs,
Silent the heaven which bends o'er all!

While day by day our loved ones glide
In spectral silence, hushed and lone,
To the cold shadows which divide
The living from the dread Unknown;

While even on the closing eye,
And on the lip which moves in vain,
The seals of that stern mystery
Their undiscovered trust retain;

And only midst the gloom of death,
Its mournful doubts and haunting fears,
Two pale, sweet angels, Hope and Faith,
Smile dimly on us through their tears;

'T is something to a heart like mine
To think of thee as living yet;
To feel that such a light as thine
Could not in utter darkness set.

Less dreary seems the untried way
Since thou hast left thy footprints there,
And beams of mournful beauty play
Round the sad Angel's sable hair.

Oh! at this hour when half the sky
Is glorious with its evening light,
And fair broad fields of summer lie
Hung o'er with greenness in my sight;

While through these elm-boughs wet with rain
The sunset's golden walls are seen,
With clover-bloom and yellow grain
And wood-draped hill and stream between;

I long to know if scenes like this
Are hidden from an angel's eyes;
If earth's familiar loveliness
Haunts not thy heaven's serener skies.

For sweetly here upon thee grew
The lesson which that beauty gave,
The ideal of the pure and true
In earth and sky and gliding wave.

And it may be that all which lends
The soul an upward impulse here,
With a diviner beauty blends,
And greets us in a holier sphere.

Through groves where blighting never fell
The humbler flowers of earth may twine;
And simple draughts from childhood's well
Blend with the angel-tasted wine.

But be the prying vision veiled,
And let the seeking lips be dumb,
Where even seraph eyes have failed
Shall mortal blindness seek to come?

We only know that thou hast gone,
And that the same returnless tide
Which bore thee from us still glides on,
And we who mourn thee with it glide.

On all thou lookest we shall look,
And to our gaze erelong shall turn
That page of God's mysterious book
We so much wish yet dread to learn.

With Him, before whose awful power
Thy spirit bent its trembling knee;
Who, in the silent greeting flower,
And forest leaf, looked out on thee,

We leave thee, with a trust serene,
Which Time, nor Change, nor Death can move,
While with thy childlike faith we lean
On Him whose dearest name is Love!

1842.

TO J. P.

John Pierpont, the eloquent preacher and poet of Boston.

Not as a poor requital of the joy
With which my childhood heard that lay of thine,
Which, like an echo of the song divine
At Bethlehem breathed above the Holy Boy,
Bore to my ear the Airs of Palestine,—
Not to the poet, but the man I bring
In friendship's fearless trust my offering:
How much it lacks I feel, and thou wilt see,
Yet well I know that thou hast deemed with me
Life all too earnest, and its time too short
For dreamy ease and Fancy's graceful sport;
And girded for thy constant strife with wrong,
Like Nehemiah fighting while he wrought
The broken walls of Zion, even thy song
Hath a rude martial tone, a blow in every thought!

1843.

CHALKLEY HALL.

Chalkley Hall, near Frankford, Pa., was the residence of Thomas Chalkley, an eminent minister of the Friends' denomination. He was one of the early settlers of the Colony, and his *Journal*, which was published in 1749, presents a quaint but beautiful picture of a life of unostentatious and simple goodness. He was the master of a merchant vessel, and, in his visits to the West Indies and Great Britain, omitted no opportunity to labor for the highest interests of his fellow-men. During a temporary residence in Philadelphia, in the summer of 1838, the quiet and beautiful scenery around the ancient village of Frankford frequently attracted me from the heat and bustle of the city. I have referred to my youthful acquaintance with his writings in *Snow-Bound*.

How bland and sweet the greeting of this breeze
To him who flies
From crowded street and red wall's weary gleam,
Till far behind him like a hideous dream
The close dark city lies!

Here, while the market murmurs, while men throng
The marble floor
Of Mammon's altar, from the crush and din
Of the world's madness let me gather in
My better thoughts once more.

Oh, once again revive, while on my ear
The cry of Gain
And low hoarse hum of Traffic die away,
Ye blessed memories of my early day
Like sere grass wet with rain!

Once more let God's green earth and sunset air
Old feelings waken;
Through weary years of toil and strife and ill,
Oh, let me feel that my good angel still
Hath not his trust forsaken.

And well do time and place befit my mood:
Beneath the arms
Of this embracing wood, a good man made
His home, like Abraham resting in the shade
Of Mamre's lonely palms.

Here, rich with autumn gifts of countless years,
The virgin soil
Turned from the share he guided, and in rain
And summer sunshine throve the fruits and grain
Which blessed his honest toil.

Here, from his voyages on the stormy seas,
Weary and worn,
He came to meet his children and to bless
The Giver of all good in thankfulness
And praise for his return.

And here his neighbors gathered in to greet
Their friend again,
Safe from the wave and the destroying gales,
Which reap untimely green Bermuda's vales,
And vex the Carib main.

To hear the good man tell of simple truth,
Sown in an hour
Of weakness in some far-off Indian isle,
From the parched bosom of a barren soil,
Raised up in life and power:

How at those gatherings in Barbadian vales,
A tendering love
Came o'er him, like the gentle rain from heaven,
And words of fitness to his lips were given,
And strength as from above:

How the sad captive listened to the Word,
Until his chain
Grew lighter, and his wounded spirit felt
The healing balm of consolation melt
Upon its life-long pain:

How the armed warrior sat him down to hear
Of Peace and Truth,
And the proud ruler and his Creole dame,
Jewelled and gorgeous in her beauty came,
And fair and bright-eyed youth.

Oh, far away beneath New England's sky,
Even when a boy,
Following my plough by Merrimac's green shore,
His simple record I have pondered o'er
With deep and quiet joy.

And hence this scene, in sunset glory warm,—
Its woods around,
Its still stream winding on in light and shade,
Its soft, green meadows and its upland glade,—
To me is holy ground.

And dearer far than haunts where Genius keeps
His vigils still;
Than that where Avon's son of song is laid,
Or Vaucluse hallowed by its Petrarch's shade,
Or Virgil's laurelled hill.

To the gray walls of fallen Paraclete,
To Juliet's urn,
Fair Arno and Sorrento's orange-grove,
Where Tasso sang, let young Romance and Love
Like brother pilgrims turn.

But here a deeper and serener charm
To all is given;
And blessed memories of the faithful dead
O'er wood and vale and meadow-stream have shed
The holy hues of Heaven!

1843.

GONE.

Another hand is beckoning us,
Another call is given;
And glows once more with Angel-steps
The path which reaches Heaven.

Our young and gentle friend, whose smile
Made brighter summer hours,
Amid the frosts of autumn time
Has left us with the flowers.

No paling of the cheek of bloom
Forewarned us of decay;
No shadow from the Silent Land
Fell round our sister's way.

The light of her young life went down,
As sinks behind the hill
The glory of a setting star,
Clear, suddenly, and still.

As pure and sweet, her fair brow seemed
Eternal as the sky;
And like the brook's low song, her voice,—
A sound which could not die.

And half we deemed she needed not
The changing of her sphere,
To give to Heaven a Shining One,
Who walked an Angel here.

The blessing of her quiet life
Fell on us like the dew;
And good thoughts where her footsteps pressed
Like fairy blossoms grew.

Sweet promptings unto kindest deeds
Were in her very look;
We read her face, as one who reads
A true and holy book:

The measure of a blessed hymn,
To which our hearts could move;
The breathing of an inward psalm,
A canticle of love.

We miss her in the place of prayer,
And by the hearth-fire's light;
We pause beside her door to hear
Once more her sweet 'Good-night!'

There seems a shadow on the day,
Her smile no longer cheers;
A dimness on the stars of night,
Like eyes that look through tears.

Alone unto our Father's will
One thought hath reconciled;
That He whose love exceedeth ours
Hath taken home His child.

Fold her, O Father! in Thine arms,
And let her henceforth be
A messenger of love between
Our human hearts and Thee.

Still let her mild rebuking stand
Between us and the wrong,
And her dear memory serve to make
Our faith in Goodness strong.

And grant that she who, trembling, here
Distrusted all her powers,
May welcome to her holier home
The well-beloved of ours.

1845.

TO RONGE.

This was written after reading the powerful and manly protest of Johannes Ronge against the 'pious fraud' of the Bishop of Treves. The bold movement of the young Catholic priest of Prussian Silesia seemed to me full of promise to the cause of political as well as religious liberty in Europe. That it failed was due partly to the faults of the reformer, but mainly to the disagreement of the Liberals of Germany upon a matter of dogma, which prevented them from unity of action. Ronge was born in Silesia in 1813 and died in October, 1887. His autobiography was translated into English and published in London in 1846.

STRIKE home, strong-hearted man! Down
to the root
Of old oppression sink the Saxon steel.
Thy work is to hew down. In God's
name then
Put nerve into thy task. Let other men
Plant, as they may, that better tree whose
fruit
The wounded bosom of the Church shall
heal.
Be thou the image-breaker. Let thy blows
Fall heavy as the Suabian's iron hand,
On crown or crosier, which shall interpose
Between thee and the weal of Fatherland.
Leave creeds to closet idlers. First of all,
Shake thou all German dream-land with
the fall
Of that accursed tree, whose evil trunk
Was spared of old by Erfurt's stalwart
monk.
Fight not with ghosts and shadows. Let
us hear
The snap of chain-links. Let our gladdened ear
Catch the pale prisoner's welcome, as the
light
Follows thy axe-stroke, through his cell
of night.

Be faithful to both worlds; nor think to feed
Earth's starving millions with the husks of creed.
Servant of Him whose mission high and holy
Was to the wronged, the sorrowing, and the lowly,
Thrust not his Eden promise from our sphere,
Distant and dim beyond the blue sky's span;
Like him of Patmos, see it, now and here,
The New Jerusalem comes down to man!
Be warned by Luther's error. Nor like him,
When the roused Teuton dashes from his limb
The rusted chain of ages, help to bind
His hands for whom thou claim'st the freedom of the mind!

1846.

CHANNING.

The last time I saw Dr. Channing was in the summer of 1841, when, in company with my English friend, Joseph Sturge, so well known for his philanthropic labors and liberal political opinions, I visited him in his summer residence in Rhode Island. In recalling the impressions of that visit, it can scarcely be necessary to say, that I have no reference to the peculiar religious opinions of a man whose life, beautifully and truly manifested above the atmosphere of sect, is now the world's common legacy.

Not vainly did old poets tell,
Nor vainly did old genius paint
God's great and crowning miracle,
The hero and the saint!

For even in a faithless day
Can we our sainted ones discern;
And feel, while with them on the way,
Our hearts within us burn.

And thus the common tongue and pen
Which, world-wide, echo Channing's fame,
As one of Heaven's anointed men,
Have sanctified his name.

In vain shall Rome her portals bar,
And shut from him her saintly prize,
Whom, in the world's great calendar,
All men shall canonize.

By Narragansett's sunny bay,
Beneath his green embowering wood,
To me it seems but yesterday
Since at his side I stood.

The slopes lay green with summer rains,
The western wind blew fresh and free,
And glimmered down the orchard lanes
The white surf of the sea.

With us was one, who, calm and true,
Life's highest purpose understood,
And, like his blessed Master, knew
The joy of doing good.

Unlearned, unknown to lettered fame,
Yet on the lips of England's poor
And toiling millions dwelt his name,
With blessings evermore.

Unknown to power or place, yet where
The sun looks o'er the Carib sea,
It blended with the freeman's prayer
And song of jubilee.

He told of England's sin and wrong,
The ills her suffering children know,
The squalor of the city's throng,
The green field's want and woe.

O'er Channing's face the tenderness
Of sympathetic sorrow stole,
Like a still shadow, passionless,
The sorrow of the soul.

But when the generous Briton told
How hearts were answering to his own,
And Freedom's rising murmur rolled
Up to the dull-eared throne,

I saw, methought, a glad surprise
Thrill through that frail and pain-worn frame,
And, kindling in those deep, calm eyes,
A still and earnest flame.

His few, brief words were such as move
The human heart,—the Faith-sown seeds
Which ripen in the soil of love
To high heroic deeds.

No bars of sect or clime were felt,
The Babel strife of tongues had ceased,
And at one common altar knelt
The Quaker and the priest.

And not in vain: with strength renewed,
And zeal refreshed, and hope less dim,
For that brief meeting, each pursued
The path allotted him.

How echoes yet each Western hill
And vale with Channing's dying word!
How are the hearts of freemen still
By that great warning stirred!

The stranger treads his native soil,
And pleads, with zeal unfelt before,
The honest right of British toil,
The claim of England's poor.

Before him time-wrought barriers fall,
Old fears subside, old hatreds melt,
And, stretching o'er the sea's blue wall,
The Saxon greets the Celt.

The yeoman on the Scottish lines,
The Sheffield grinder, worn and grim,
The delver in the Cornwall mines,
Look up with hope to him.

Swart smiters of the glowing steel,
Dark feeders of the forge's flame,
Pale watchers at the loom and wheel,
Repeat his honored name.

And thus the influence of that hour
Of converse on Rhode Island's strand
Lives in the calm, resistless power
Which moves our fatherland.

God blesses still the generous thought,
And still the fitting word He speeds,
And Truth, at His requiring taught,
He quickens into deeds.

Where is the victory of the grave?
What dust upon the spirit lies?
God keeps the sacred life he gave,—
The prophet never dies!

1844.

TO MY FRIEND ON THE DEATH OF HIS SISTER.

Sophia Sturge, sister of Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, the President of the British Complete Suffrage Association, died in the 6th month, 1845. She was the colleague, counsellor, and ever-ready helpmate of her brother in all his vast designs of beneficence. The *Birmingham Pilot* says of her: 'Never, perhaps, were the active and passive virtues of the human character more harmoniously and beautifully blended than in this excellent woman.'

THINE is a grief, the depth of which
another
May never know;
Yet, o'er the waters, O my stricken
brother!
To thee I go.

I lean my heart unto thee, sadly folding
Thy hand in mine;
With even the weakness of my soul
upholding
The strength of thine.

I never knew, like thee, the dear departed;
I stood not by
When, in calm trust, the pure and
tranquil-hearted
Lay down to die.

And on thy ears my words of weak
condoling
Must vainly fall:
The funeral bell which in thy heart is
tolling,
Sounds over all!

I will not mock thee with the poor
world's common
And heartless phrase,
Nor wrong the memory of a sainted
woman
With idle praise.

With silence only as their benediction,
God's angels come
Where, in the shadow of a great affliction,
The soul sits dumb!

Yet, would I say what thy own heart approveth:
Our Father's will,
Calling to Him the dear one whom He loveth,
Is mercy still.

Not upon thee or thine the solemn angel
Hath evil wrought:
Her funeral anthem is a glad evangel,—
The good die not!

God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly
What He hath given;
They live on earth, in thought and deed, as truly
As in His heaven.

And she is with thee; in thy path of trial
She walketh yet;
Still with the baptism of thy self-denial
Her locks are wet.

Up, then, my brother! Lo, the fields of harvest
Lie white in view!
She lives and loves thee, and the God thou servest
To both is true.

Thrust in thy sickle! England's toilworn peasants
Thy call abide;
And she thou mourn'st, a pure and holy presence,
Shall glean beside!

1845.

DANIEL WHEELER.

Daniel Wheeler, a minister of the Society of Friends, who had labored in the cause of his Divine Master in Great Britain, Russia, and the islands of the Pacific, died in New York in the spring of 1840, while on a religious visit to this country.

O DEARLY loved!
And worthy of our love! No more
Thy aged form shall rise before
The hushed and waiting worshipper.
In meek obedience utterance giving
To words of truth, so fresh and living,
That, even to the inward sense,
They bore unquestioned evidence
Of an anointed Messenger!
Or, bowing down thy silver hair
In reverent awfulness of prayer,
The world, its time and sense, shut out,
The brightness of Faith's holy trance
Gathered upon thy countenance,
As if each lingering cloud of doubt,
The cold, dark shadows resting here
In Time's unluminous atmosphere,
Were lifted by an angel's hand,
And through them on thy spiritual eye
Shone down the blessedness on high,
The glory of the Better Land!

The oak has fallen!
While, meet for no good work, the vine
May yet its worthless branches twine,
Who knoweth not that with thee fell
A great man in our Israel?
Fallen, while thy loins were girded still,
Thy feet with Zion's dews still wet,
And in thy hand retaining yet
The pilgrim's staff and scallop-shell!
Unharmed and safe, where, wild and free,
Across the Neva's cold morass
The breezes from the Frozen Sea
With winter's arrowy keenness pass;
Or where the unwarning tropic gale
Smote to the waves thy tattered sail,
Or where the noon-hour's fervid heat
Against Tahiti's mountains beat;
The same mysterious Hand which gave
Deliverance upon land and wave,
Tempered for thee the blasts which blew
Ladaga's frozen surface o'er,
And blessed for thee the baleful dew
Of evening upon Eimeo's shore,
Beneath this sunny heaven of ours,
Midst our soft airs and opening flowers
Hath given thee a grave!

His will be done,
Who seeth not as man, whose way
Is not as ours! 'T is well with thee!
Nor anxious doubt nor dark dismay
Disquieted thy closing day,
But, evermore, thy soul could say,

'My Father careth still for me!'
Called from thy hearth and home,—from her,
The last bud on thy household tree,
The last dear one to minister
In duty and in love to thee,
From all which nature holdeth dear,
Feeble with years and worn with pain,
To seek our distant land again,
Bound in the spirit, yet unknowing
The things which should befall thee here,
Whether for labor or for death,
In childlike trust serenely going
To that last trial of thy faith!

Oh, far away,
Where never shines our Northern star
On that dark waste which Balboa saw
From Darien's mountains stretching far,
So strange, heaven-broad, and lone, that there,
With forehead to its damp wind bare,
He bent his mailëd knee in awe;
In many an isle whose coral feet
The surges of that ocean beat,
In thy palm shadows, Oahu,
And Honolulu's silver bay,
Amidst Owyhee's hills of blue,
And taro-plains of Tooboonai,
Are gentle hearts, which long shall be
Sad as our own at thought of thee,
Worn sowers of Truth's holy seed,
Whose souls in weariness and need
Were strengthened and refreshed by thine.
For blessëd by our Father's hand
Was thy deep love and tender care,
Thy ministry and fervent prayer,—
Grateful as Eshcol's clustered vine
To Israel in a weary land!

And they who drew
By thousands round thee, in the hour
Of prayerful waiting, hushed and deep,
That He who bade the islands keep
Silence before Him, might renew
Their strength with His unslumbering power,
They too shall mourn that thou art gone,
That nevermore thy aged lip
Shall soothe the weak, the erring warn,
Of those who first, rejoicing, heard
Through thee the Gospel's glorious word,—
Seals of thy true apostleship.
And, if the brightest diadem,
Whose gems of glory purely burn
Around the ransomed ones in bliss,
Be evermore reserved for them
Who here, through toil and sorrow, turn
Many to righteousness,
May we not think of thee as wearing
That star-like crown of light, and bearing,
Amidst Heaven's white and blissful band,
Th' unfading palm-branch in thy hand;
And joining with a seraph's tongue
In that new song the elders sung,
Ascribing to its blessed Giver
Thanksgiving, love, and praise forever!

Farewell!
And though the ways of Zion mourn
When her strong ones are called away,
Who like thyself have calmly borne
The heat and burden of the day,
Yet He who slumbereth not nor sleepeth
His ancient watch around us keepeth;
Still, sent from His creating hand,
New witnesses for Truth shall stand,
New instruments to sound abroad
The Gospel of a risen Lord;
To gather to the fold once more
The desolate and gone astray,
The scattered of a cloudy day,
And Zion's broken walls restore;
And, through the travail and the toil
Of true obedience, minister
Beauty for ashes, and the oil
Of joy for mourning, unto her!
So shall her holy bounds increase
With walls of praise and gates of peace:
So shall the Vine, which martyr tears
And blood sustained in other years,
With fresher life be clothed upon;
And to the world in beauty show
Like the rose-plant of Jericho,
And glorious as Lebanon!

1847.

TO FREDRIKA BREMER.

It is proper to say that these lines are the joint impromptus of my sister and myself. They are inserted here as an expression of our admiration of the gifted stranger whom we have since learned to love as a friend.

SEERESS of the misty Norland,
Daughter of the Vikings bold,
Welcome to the sunny Vineland,
Which thy fathers sought of old!

Soft as flow of Silja's waters,
When the moon of summer shines,
Strong as Winter from his mountains
Roaring through the sleeted pines.

Heart and ear, we long have listened
To thy saga, rune, and song;
As a household joy and presence
We have known and loved thee long.

By the mansion's marble mantel,
Round the log-walled cabin's hearth,
Thy sweet thoughts and northern fancies
Meet and mingle with our mirth.

And o'er weary spirits keeping
Sorrow's night-watch, long and chill,
Shine they like thy sun of summer
Over midnight vale and hill.

We alone to thee are strangers,
Thou our friend and teacher art;
Come, and know us as we know thee;
Let us meet thee heart to heart!

To our homes and household altars
We, in turn, thy steps would lead,
As thy loving hand has led us
O'er the threshold of the Swede.

1849.

TO AVIS KEENE.

ON RECEIVING A BASKET OF SEA-MOSSES.

THANKS for thy gift
Of ocean flowers,
Born where the golden drift
Of the slant sunshine falls
Down the green, tremulous walls
Of water, to the cool, still coral bowers,
Where, under rainbows of perpetual showers,
God's gardens of the deep
His patient angels keep;
Gladdening the dim, strange solitude
With fairest forms and hues, and thus
Forever teaching us
The lesson which the many-colored skies,
The flowers, and leaves, and painted butterflies,
The deer's branched antlers, the gay bird that flings
The tropic sunshine from its golden wings,
The brightness of the human countenance,
Its play of smiles, the magic of a glance,
Forevermore repeat,
In varied tones and sweet,
That beauty, in and of itself, is good.

O kind and generous friend, o'er whom
The sunset hues of Time are cast,
Painting, upon the overpast
And scattered clouds of noonday sorrow
The promise of a fairer morrow,
An earnest of the better life to come;
The binding of the spirit broken,
The warning to the erring spoken,
The comfort of the sad,
The eye to see, the hand to cull
Of common things the beautiful,
The absent heart made glad
By simple gift or graceful token
Of love it needs as daily food,
All own one Source, and all are good!
Hence, tracking sunny cove and reach,
Where spent waves glimmer up the beach,
And toss their gifts of weed and shell
From foamy curve and combing swell,
No unbefitting task was thine
To weave these flowers so soft and fair
In unison with His design
Who loveth beauty everywhere;
And makes in every zone and clime,
In ocean and in upper air,
'All things beautiful in their time.'

For not alone in tones of awe and power
He speaks to man;
The cloudy horror of the thunder-shower
His rainbows span;
And where the caravan
Winds o'er the desert, leaving, as in air
The crane-flock leaves, no trace of passage there,
He gives the weary eye
The palm-leaf shadow for the hot noon hours,
And on its branches dry
Calls out the acacia's flowers;
And where the dark shaft pierces down
Beneath the mountain roots,
Seen by the miner's lamp alone,
The star-like crystal shoots;
So, where, the winds and waves below,
The coral-branchëd gardens grow,
His climbing weeds and mosses show,
Like foliage, on each stony bough,
Of varied hues more strangely gay
Than forest leaves in autumn's day;—
Thus evermore,
On sky, and wave, and shore,
An all-pervading beauty seems to say:
God's love and power are one; and they,
Who, like the thunder of a sultry day,
Smite to restore,
And they, who, like the gentle wind, uplift
The petals of the dew-wet flowers, and drift
Their perfume on the air,
Alike may serve Him, each, with their own gift,
Making their lives a prayer!

1850.

THE HILL-TOP.

The burly driver at my side,
We slowly climbed the hill,
Whose summit, in the hot noontide,
Seemed rising, rising still.
At last, our short noon-shadows hid
The top-stone, bare and brown,
From whence, like Gizeh's pyramid,
The rough mass slanted down.

I felt the cool breath of the North;
Between me and the sun,
O'er deep, still lake, and ridgy earth,
I saw the cloud-shades run.
Before me, stretched for glistening miles,
Lay mountain-girdled Squam;
Like green-winged birds, the leafy isles
Upon its bosom swam.

And, glimmering through the sun-haze warm,
Far as the eye could roam,
Dark billows of an earthquake storm
Beflecked with clouds like foam,
Their vales in misty shadow deep,
Their rugged peaks in shine,
I saw the mountain ranges sweep
The horizon's northern line.

There towered Chocorua's peak; and west,
Moosehillock's woods were seen,
With many a nameless slide-scarred crest
And pine-dark gorge between.
Beyond them, like a sun-rimmed cloud,
The great Notch mountains shone,
Watched over by the solemn-browed
And awful face of stone!

'A good look-off!' the driver spake:
'About this time, last year,
I drove a party to the Lake,
And stopped, at evening, here.
"T was duskish down below; but all
These hills stood in the sun,
Till, dipped behind yon purple wall,
He left them, one by one.

'A lady, who, from Thornton hill,
Had held her place outside,
And, as a pleasant woman will,
Had cheered the long, dull ride,
Besought me, with so sweet a smile,
That—though I hate delays—
I could not choose but rest awhile,—
(These women have such ways!)

'On yonder mossy ledge she sat,
Her sketch upon her knees,
A stray brown lock beneath her hat
Unrolling in the breeze;

Her sweet face, in the sunset light
Upraised and glorified,—
I never saw a prettier sight
In all my mountain ride.

'As good as fair; it seemed her joy
To comfort and to give;
My poor, sick wife, and cripple boy,
Will bless her while they live!'
The tremor in the driver's tone
His manhood did not shame:
'I dare say, sir, you may have known'—
He named a well-known name.

Then sank the pyramidal mounds,
The blue lake fled away;
For mountain-scope a parlor's bounds,
A lighted hearth for day!
From lonely years and weary miles
The shadows fell apart;
Kind voices cheered, sweet human smiles
Shone warm into my heart.

We journeyed on; but earth and sky
Had power to charm no more;
Still dreamed my inward-turning eye
The dream of memory o'er.
Ah! human kindness, human love,—
To few who seek denied;
Too late we learn to prize above
The whole round world beside!

1850.

ELLIOTT.

Ebenezer Elliott was to the artisans of England what Burns was to the peasantry of Scotland. His *Corn-law Rhymes* contributed not a little to that overwhelming tide of popular opinion and feeling which resulted in the repeal of the tax on bread. Well has the eloquent author of *The Reforms and Reformers of Great Britain* said of him, 'Not corn-law repealers alone, but all Britons who moisten their scanty bread with the sweat of the brow, are largely indebted to his inspiring lay, for the mighty bound which the laboring mind of England has taken in our day.'

HANDS off! thou tithe-fat plunderer! play
No trick of priestcraft here!
Back, puny lordling! darest thou lay
A hand on Elliott's bier?
Alive, your rank and pomp, as dust,
Beneath his feet he trod:
He knew the locust swarm that cursed
The harvest-fields of God.

On these pale lips, the smothered thought
Which England's millions feel,
A fierce and fearful splendor caught,
As from his forge the steel.
Strong-armed as Thor, a shower of fire
His smitten anvil flung;
God's curse, Earth's wrong, dumb Hunger's ire,
He gave them all a tongue!

Then let the poor man's horny hands
Bear up the mighty dead,
And labor's swart and stalwart bands
Behind as mourners tread.
Leave cant and craft their baptized bounds,
Leave rank its minster floor;
Give England's green and daisied grounds
The poet of the poor!

Lay down upon his Sheaf's green verge
That brave old heart of oak,
With fitting dirge from sounding forge,
And pall of furnace smoke!
Where whirls the stone its dizzy rounds,
And axe and sledge are swung,
And, timing to their stormy sounds,
His stormy lays are sung.

There let the peasant's step be heard,
The grinder chant his rhyme;
Nor patron's praise nor dainty word
Befits the man or time.
No soft lament nor dreamer's sigh
For him whose words were bread;
The Runic rhyme and spell whereby
The foodless poor were fed!

Pile up the tombs of rank and pride,
O England, as thou wilt!
With pomp to nameless worth denied,
Emblazon titled guilt!
No part or lot in these we claim;
But, o'er the sounding wave,
A common right to Elliott's name,
A freehold in his grave!

1850.

ICHABOD.

This poem was the outcome of the surprise and grief and forecast of evil consequences which I felt on reading the seventh of March speech of Daniel Webster in support of the 'compromise,' and the Fugitive Slave Law. No partisan or personal enmity dictated it. On the contrary my admiration of the splendid personality and intellectual power of the great Senator was never stronger than when I laid down his speech, and, in one of the saddest moments of my life, penned my protest. I saw, as I wrote, with painful clearness its sure results,—the Slave Power arrogant and defiant, strengthened and encouraged to carry out its scheme for the extension of its baleful system, or the dissolution of the Union, the guaranties of personal liberty in the free States broken down, and the whole country made the hunting-ground of slave-catchers. In the horror of such a vision, so soon fearfully fulfilled, if one spoke at all, he could only speak in tones of stern and sorrowful rebuke.

But death softens all resentments, and the consciousness of a common inheritance of frailty and weakness modifies the severity of judgment. Years after, in *The Lost Occasion*, I gave utterance to an almost universal regret that the great statesman did not live to see the flag which he loved trampled under the feet of Slavery, and, in view of this desecration, make his last days glorious in defence of 'Liberty and Union, one and inseparable.'

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

Revile him not, the Tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains;
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!

1850.

THE LOST OCCASION.

Some die too late and some too soon,
At early morning, heat of noon,
Or the chill evening twilight. Thou,
Whom the rich heavens did so endow
With eyes of power and Jove's own brow,
With all the massive strength that fills
Thy home-horizon's granite hills,
With rarest gifts of heart and head
From manliest stock inherited,
New England's stateliest type of man,
In port and speech Olympian;
Whom no one met, at first, but took
A second awed and wondering look
(As turned, perchance, the eyes of Greece
On Phidias' unveiled masterpiece);
Whose words in simplest homespun clad,
The Saxon strength of Cædmon's had,
With power reserved at need to reach
The Roman forum's loftiest speech,
Sweet with persuasion, eloquent
In passion, cool in argument,
Or, ponderous, falling on thy foes
As fell the Norse god's hammer blows,

Crushing as if with Talus' flail
Through Error's logic-woven mail,
And failing only when they tried
The adamant of the righteous side,—
Thou, foiled in aim and hope, bereaved
Of old friends, by the new deceived,
Too soon for us, too soon for thee,
Beside thy lonely Northern sea,
Where long and low the marsh-lands spread,
Laid wearily down thy august head.

Thou shouldst have lived to feel below
Thy feet Disunion's fierce upthrow;
The late-sprung mine that underlaid
Thy sad concessions vainly made.
Thou shouldst have seen from Sumter's wall
The star-flag of the Union fall,
And armed rebellion pressing on
The broken lines of Washington!
No stronger voice than thine had then
Called out the utmost might of men,
To make the Union's charter free
And strengthen law by liberty.
How had that stern arbitrament
To thy gray age youth's vigor lent,
Shaming ambition's paltry prize
Before thy disillusioned eyes;
Breaking the spell about thee wound
Like the green withes that Samson bound;
Redeeming in one effort grand,
Thyself and thy imperilled land!
Ah, cruel fate, that closed to thee,
O sleeper by the Northern sea,
The gates of opportunity!
God fills the gaps of human need,
Each crisis brings its word and deed.
Wise men and strong we did not lack;
But still, with memory turning back,
In the dark hours we thought of thee,
And thy lone grave beside the sea.

Above that grave the east winds blow,
And from the marsh-lands drifting slow
The sea-fog comes, with evermore
The wave-wash of a lonely shore,
And sea-bird's melancholy cry,
As Nature fain would typify
The sadness of a closing scene,
The loss of that which should have been.

But, where thy native mountains bare
Their foreheads to diviner air,
Fit emblem of enduring fame,
One lofty summit keeps thy name.
For thee the cosmic forces did
The rearing of that pyramid,
The prescient ages shaping with
Fire, flood, and frost thy monolith.
Sunrise and sunset lay thereon
With hands of light their benison,
The stars of midnight pause to set
Their jewels in its coronet.
And evermore that mountain mass
Seems climbing from the shadowy pass
To light, as if to manifest
Thy nobler self, thy life at best!

1880.

WORDSWORTH.

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF HIS MEMOIRS.

Dear friends, who read the world aright,
And in its common forms discern
A beauty and a harmony
The many never learn!

Kindred in soul of him who found
In simple flower and leaf and stone
The impulse of the sweetest lays
Our Saxon tongue has known,—

Accept this record of a life
As sweet and pure, as calm and good,
As a long day of blandest June
In green field and in wood.

How welcome to our ears, long pained
By strife of sect and party noise,
The brook-like murmur of his song
Of nature's simple joys!

The violet by its mossy stone,
The primrose by the river's brim,
And chance-sown daffodil, have found
Immortal life through him.

The sunrise on his breezy lake,
The rosy tints his sunset brought,
World-seen, are gladdening all the vales
And mountain-peaks of thought.

Art builds on sand; the works of pride
And human passion change and fall;
But that which shares the life of God
With Him surviveth all.

1851.

TO ——.

LINES WRITTEN AFTER A SUMMER DAY'S EXCURSION.

Fair Nature's priestesses! to whom,
In hieroglyph of bud and bloom,
Her mysteries are told;
Who, wise in lore of wood and mead,
The seasons' pictured scrolls can read,
In lessons manifold!

Thanks for the courtesy, and gay
Good-humor, which on Washing Day
Our ill-timed visit bore;
Thanks for your graceful oars, which broke
The morning dreams of Artichoke,
Along his wooded shore!

Varied as varying Nature's ways,
Sprites of the river, woodland fays,
Or mountain nymphs, ye seem;
Free-limbed Dianas on the green,
Loch Katrine's Ellen, or Undine,
Upon your favorite stream.

The forms of which the poets told,
The fair benignities of old,
Were doubtless such as you;
What more than Artichoke the rill
Of Helicon? Than Pipe-stave hill
Arcadia's mountain-view?

No sweeter bowers the bee delayed,
In wild Hymettus' scented shade,
Than those you dwell among;
Snow-flowered azaleas, intertwined
With roses, over banks inclined
With trembling harebells hung!

A charmëd life unknown to death,
Immortal freshness Nature hath;
Her fabled fount and glen
Are now and here: Dodona's shrine
Still murmurs in the wind-swept pine,—
All is that e'er hath been.

The beauty which old Greece or Rome
Sung, painted, wrought, lies close at home;
We need but eye and ear
In all our daily walks to trace
The outlines of incarnate grace,
The hymns of gods to hear!

1851.

IN PEACE.

A track of moonlight on a quiet lake,
Whose small waves on a silver-sanded shore
Whisper of peace, and with the low winds make
Such harmonies as keep the woods awake,
And listening all night long for their sweet sake;
A green-waved slope of meadow, hovered o'er
By angel-troops of lilies, swaying light
On viewless stems, with folded wings of white;
A slumberous stretch of mountain-land, far seen
Where the low westering day, with gold and green,
Purple and amber, softly blended, fills
The wooded vales, and melts among the hills;
A vine-fringed river, winding to its rest
On the calm bosom of a stormless sea,
Bearing alike upon its placid breast,
With earthly flowers and heavenly stars impressed,
The hues of time and of eternity:
Such are the pictures which the thought of thee,
O friend, awakeneth,—charming the keen pain
Of thy departure, and our sense of loss
Requiting with the fullness of thy gain.
Lo! on the quiet grave thy life-borne cross,
Dropped only at its side, methinks doth shine,
Of thy beatitude the radiant sign!

No sob of grief, no wild lament be there,
To break the Sabbath of the holy air;
But, in their stead, the silent-breathing prayer
Of hearts still waiting for a rest like thine.
O spirit redeemed! Forgive us, if henceforth,
With sweet and pure similitudes of earth,
We keep thy pleasant memory freshly green,
Of love's inheritance a priceless part,
Which Fancy's self, in reverent awe, is seen
To paint, forgetful of the tricks of art,
With pencil dipped alone in colors of the heart.

1851.

BENEDICITE.

God's love and peace be with thee, where
Soe'er this soft autumnal air
Lifts the dark tresses of thy hair!

Whether through city casements comes
Its kiss to thee, in crowded rooms,
Or, out among the woodland blooms,

It freshens o'er thy thoughtful face,
Imparting, in its glad embrace,
Beauty to beauty, grace to grace!

Fair Nature's book together read,
The old wood-paths that knew our tread,
The maple shadows overhead,—

The hills we climbed, the river seen
By gleams along its deep ravine,—
All keep thy memory fresh and green.

Where'er I look, where'er I stray,
Thy thought goes with me on my way,
And hence the prayer I breathe to-day;

O'er lapse of time and change of scene,
The weary waste which lies between
Thyself and me, my heart I lean.

Thou lack'st not Friendship's spell-word, nor
The half-unconscious power to draw
All hearts to thine by Love's sweet law.
With these good gifts of God is cast
Thy lot, and many a charm thou hast
To hold the blessed angels fast.

If, then, a fervent wish for thee
The gracious heavens will heed from me,
What should, dear heart, its burden be?

The sighing of a shaken reed,—
What can I more than meekly plead
The greatness of our common need?

God's love,—unchanging, pure, and true,—
The Paraclete white-shining through
His peace,—the fall of Hermon's dew!

With such a prayer, on this sweet day,
As thou mayst hear, and I may say,
I greet thee, dearest, far away!

1851.

KOSSUTH.

It can scarcely be necessary to say that there are elements in the character and passages in the history of the great Hungarian statesman and orator, which necessarily command the admiration of those, even, who believe that no political revolution was ever worth the price of human blood.

Type of two mighty continents!—combining
The strength of Europe with the warmth and glow
Of Asian song and prophecy,—the shining
Of Orient splendors over Northern snow!
Who shall receive him? Who, unblushing, speak
Welcome to him, who, while he strove to break
The Austrian yoke from Magyar necks, smote off
At the same blow the fetters of the serf,
Rearing the altar of his Fatherland
On the firm base of freedom, and thereby
Lifting to Heaven a patriot's stainless hand,
Mocked not the God of Justice with a lie!

Who shall be Freedom's mouthpiece? Who shall give
Her welcoming cheer to the great fugitive?
Not he who, all her sacred trusts betraying,
Is scourging back to slavery's hell of pain
The swarthy Kossuths of our land again!
Not he whose utterance now from lips designed
The bugle-march of Liberty to wind,
And call her hosts beneath the breaking light,
The keen reveille of her morn of fight,
Is but the hoarse note of the blood-hound's baying,
The wolf's long howl behind the bondman's flight!
Oh for the tongue of him who lies at rest
In Quincy's shade of patrimonial trees,
Last of the Puritan tribunes and the best,
To lend a voice to Freedom's sympathies,
And hail the coming of the noblest guest
The Old World's wrong has given the New World of the West!

1851.

TO MY OLD SCHOOLMASTER.

AN EPISTLE NOT AFTER THE MANNER OF HORACE.

These lines were addressed to my worthy friend Joshua Coffin, teacher, historian, and antiquarian. He was one of the twelve persons who with William Lloyd Garrison formed the first anti-slavery society in New England.

OLD friend, kind friend! lightly down
Drop time's snow-flakes on thy crown!
Never be thy shadow less,
Never fail thy cheerfulness;
Care, that kills the cat, may plough
Wrinkles in the miser's brow,
Deepen envy's spiteful frown,
Draw the mouths of bigots down,
Plague ambition's dream, and sit
Heavy on the hypocrite,
Haunt the rich man's door, and ride
In the gilded coach of pride;—
Let the fiend pass!—what can he
Find to do with such as thee?
Seldom comes that evil guest
Where the conscience lies at rest,
And brown health and quiet wit
Smiling on the threshold sit.

I, the urchin unto whom,
In that smoked and dingy room,
Where the district gave thee rule
O'er its ragged winter school,
Thou didst teach the mysteries
Of those weary A B C's,—
Where, to fill the every pause
Of thy wise and learned saws,
Through the cracked and crazy wall
Came the cradle-rock and squall,
And the goodman's voice, at strife,[39]
With his shrill and tipsy wife,—
Luring us by stories old,
With a comic unction told,
More than by the eloquence
Of terse birchen arguments
(Doubtful gain, I fear), to look
With complacence on a book!—
Where the genial pedagogue
Half forgot his rogues to flog,
Citing tale or apologue,
Wise and merry in its drift
As was Phædrus' twofold gift,
Had the little rebels known it,
Risum et prudentiam monet!
I,—the man of middle years,
In whose sable locks appears
Many a warning fleck of gray,—
Looking back to that far day,
And thy primal lessons, feel
Grateful smiles my lips unseal,
As, remembering thee, I blend
Olden teacher, present friend,
Wise with antiquarian search,
In the scrolls of State and Church:
Named on history's title-page,
Parish-clerk and justice sage;
For the ferule's wholesome awe
Wielding now the sword of law.

Threshing Time's neglected sheaves,
Gathering up the scattered leaves
Which the wrinkled sibyl cast
Careless from her as she passed,—
Twofold citizen art thou,
Freeman of the past and now.
He who bore thy name of old
Midway in the heavens did hold
Over Gibeon moon and sun;
Thou hast bidden them backward run;
Of to-day the present ray
Flinging over yesterday!

Let the busy ones deride
What I deem of right thy pride:
Let the fools their treadmills grind,
Look not forward nor behind,
Shuffle in and wriggle out,
Veer with every breeze about,
Turning like a windmill sail,
Or a dog that seeks his tail:
Let them laugh to see thee fast
Tabernacled in the Past,
Working out with eye and lip,
Riddles of old penmanship,
Patient as Belzoni there
Sorting out, with loving care,
Mummies of dead questions stripped
From their sevenfold manuscript!

Dabbling, in their noisy way,
In the puddles of to-day,
Little know they of that vast
Solemn ocean of the past,
On whose margin, wreck-bespread,
Thou art walking with the dead,
Questioning the stranded years,
Waking smiles by turns, and tears,
As thou callest up again
Shapes the dust has long o'erlain,—
Fair-haired woman, bearded man,
Cavalier and Puritan;
In an age whose eager view
Seeks but present things, and new,
Mad for party, sect and gold,
Teaching reverence for the old.

On that shore, with fowler's tact,
Coolly bagging fact on fact.
Naught amiss to thee can float,
Tale, or song, or anecdote;
Village gossip, centuries old,
Scandals by our grandams told,
What the pilgrim's table spread,
Where he lived, and whom he wed,
Long-drawn bill of wine and beer
For his ordination cheer,
Or the flip that wellnigh made
Glad his funeral cavalcade;
Weary prose, and poet's lines,
Flavored by their age, like wines,
Eulogistic of some quaint,
Doubtful, puritanic saint;
Lays that quickened husking jigs,
Jests that shook grave periwigs,
When the parson had his jokes
And his glass, like other folks;
Sermons that, for mortal hours,
Taxed our fathers' vital powers,
As the long nineteenthlies poured
Downward from the sounding-board,
And, for fire of Pentecost,
Touched their beards December's frost.

Time is hastening on, and we
What our fathers are shall be,—
Shadow-shapes of memory!
Joined to that vast multitude
Where the great are but the good,
And the mind of strength shall prove
Weaker than the heart of love;
Pride of graybeard wisdom less
Than the infant's guilelessness,
And his song of sorrow more
Than the crown the Psalmist wore!
Who shall then, with pious zeal,
At our moss-grown thresholds kneel,
From a stained and stony page
Reading to a careless age,
With a patient eye like thine,
Prosing tale and limping line,
Names and words the hoary rime
Of the Past has made sublime?
Who shall work for us as well
The antiquarian's miracle?
Who to seeming life recall
Teacher grave and pupil small?
Who shall give to thee and me
Freeholds in futurity?

Well, whatever lot be mine,
Long and happy days be thine.

Ere thy full and honored age
Dates of time its latest page!
Squire for master, State for school,
Wisely lenient, live and rule;
Over grown-up knave and rogue
Play the watchful pedagogue;
Or, while pleasure smiles on duty,
At the call of youth and beauty,
Speak for them the spell of law
Which shall bar and bolt withdraw,
And the flaming sword remove
From the Paradise of Love.
Still, with undimmed eyesight, pore
Ancient tome and record o'er;
Still thy week-day lyrics croon,
Pitch in church the Sunday tune,
Showing something, in thy part,
Of the old Puritanic art,
Singer after Sternhold's heart!
In thy pew, for many a year,
Homilies from Oldbug hear,[40]
Who to wit like that of South,
And the Syrian's golden mouth,
Doth the homely pathos add
Which the pilgrim preachers had;
Breaking, like a child at play,
Gilded idols of the day,
Cant of knave and pomp of fool
Tossing with his ridicule,
Yet, in earnest or in jest,
Ever keeping truth abreast.
And, when thou art called, at last,
To thy townsmen of the past,
Not as stranger shalt thou come;
Thou shalt find thyself at home
With the little and the big,
Woollen cap and periwig,
Madam in her high-laced ruff,
Goody in her home-made stuff,—
Wise and simple, rich and poor,
Thou hast known them all before!

1851.

THE CROSS.

Richard Dillingham, a young member of the Society of Friends, died in the Nashville penitentiary, where he was confined for the act of aiding the escape of fugitive slaves.

'The cross, if rightly borne, shall be
No burden, but support to thee;'
So, moved of old time for our sake,
The holy monk of Kempen spake.[41]

Thou brave and true one! upon whom
Was laid the cross of martyrdom,
How didst thou, in thy generous youth,
Bear witness to this blessed truth!

Thy cross of suffering and of shame
A staff within thy hands became,
In paths where faith alone could see
The Master's steps supporting thee.

Thine was the seed-time; God alone
Beholds the end of what is sown;
Beyond our vision, weak and dim,
The harvest-time is hid with Him.

Yet, unforgotten where it lies,
That seed of generous sacrifice,
Though seeming on the desert cast,
Shall rise with bloom and fruit at last.

1852.

THE HERO.

The hero of the incident related in this poem was Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the well-known philanthropist, who when a young man volunteered his aid in the Greek struggle for independence.

'Oh for a knight like Bayard,
Without reproach or fear;
My light glove on his casque of steel,
My love-knot on his spear!

'Oh for the white plume floating
Sad Zutphen's field above,—
The lion heart in battle,
The woman's heart in love!

'Oh that man once more were manly,
Woman's pride, and not her scorn:
That once more the pale young mother
Dared to boast "a man is born"!

'But now life's slumberous current
No sun-bowed cascade wakes;
No tall, heroic manhood
The level dulness breaks.

'Oh for a knight like Bayard,
Without reproach or fear!
My light glove on his casque of steel,
My love-knot on his spear!'

Then I said, my own heart throbbing
To the time her proud pulse beat,
'Life hath its regal natures yet,
True, tender, brave, and sweet!

'Smile not, fair unbeliever!
One man, at least, I know,
Who might wear the crest of Bayard
Or Sidney's plume of snow.

'Once, when over purple mountains
Died away the Grecian sun,
And the far Cyllenian ranges
Paled and darkened, one by one.—

'Fell the Turk, a bolt of thunder,
Cleaving all the quiet sky,
And against his sharp steel lightnings
Stood the Suliote but to die.

'Woe for the weak and halting!
The crescent blazed behind
A curving line of sabres,
Like fire before the wind!

'Last to fly, and first to rally,
Rode he of whom I speak,
When, groaning in his bridle-path,
Sank down a wounded Greek.

'With the rich Albanian costume
Wet with many a ghastly stain,
Gazing on earth and sky as one
Who might not gaze again!

'He looked forward to the mountains,
Back on foes that never spare,
Then flung him from his saddle,
And placed the stranger there.

'"Allah! hu!" Through flashing sabres,
Through a stormy hail of lead,
The good Thessalian charger
Up the slopes of olives sped.

'Hot spurred the turbaned riders;
He almost felt their breath,
Where a mountain stream rolled darkly down
Between the hills and death.

'One brave and manful struggle,—
He gained the solid land,
And the cover of the mountains,
And the carbines of his band!'

'It was very great and noble,'
Said the moist-eyed listener then,
'But one brave deed makes no hero;
Tell me what he since hath been!'

'Still a brave and generous manhood,
Still an honor without stain,
In the prison of the Kaiser,
By the barricades of Seine.

'But dream not helm and harness
The sign of valor true;
Peace hath higher tests of manhood
Than battle ever knew.

'Wouldst know him now? Behold him,
The Cadmus of the blind,
Giving the dumb lip language,
The idiot-clay a mind.

'Walking his round of duty
Serenely day by day,
With the strong man's hand of labor
And childhood's heart of play.

'True as the knights of story,
Sir Lancelot and his peers,
Brave in his calm endurance
As they in tilt of spears.

'As waves in stillest waters,
As stars in noonday skies,
All that wakes to noble action
In his noon of calmness lies.

'Wherever outraged Nature
Asks word or action brave,
Wherever struggles labor,
Wherever groans a slave,—

'Wherever rise the peoples,
Wherever sinks a throne,
The throbbing heart of Freedom finds
An answer in his own.

'Knight of a better era,
Without reproach or fear!
Said I not well that Bayards
And Sidneys still are here?'

1853.

RANTOUL.

No more fitting inscription could be placed on the tombstone of Robert Rantoul than this: 'He died at his post in Congress, and his last words were a protest in the name of Democracy against the Fugitive-Slave Law.'

One day, along the electric wire
His manly word for Freedom sped;
We came next morn: that tongue of fire
Said only, 'He who spake is dead!'

Dead! while his voice was living yet,
In echoes round the pillared dome!
Dead! while his blotted page lay wet
With themes of state and loves of home!

Dead! in that crowning grace of time,
That triumph of life's zenith hour!
Dead! while we watched his manhood's prime
Break from the slow bud into flower!

Dead! he so great, and strong, and wise,
While the mean thousands yet drew breath;
How deepened, through that dread surprise,
The mystery and the awe of death!

From the high place whereon our votes
Had borne him, clear, calm, earnest, fell
His first words, like the prelude notes
Of some great anthem yet to swell.

We seemed to see our flag unfurled,
Our champion waiting in his place
For the last battle of the world,
The Armageddon of the race.

Through him we hoped to speak the word
Which wins the freedom of a land;
And lift, for human right, the sword
Which dropped from Hampden's dying hand.

For he had sat at Sidney's feet,
And walked with Pym and Vane apart;
And, through the centuries, felt the beat
Of Freedom's march in Cromwell's heart.

He knew the paths the worthies held,
Where England's best and wisest trod;
And, lingering, drank the springs that welled
Beneath the touch of Milton's rod.

No wild enthusiast of the right,
Self-poised and clear, he showed alway
The coolness of his northern night,
The ripe repose of autumn's day.

His steps were slow, yet forward still
He pressed where others paused or failed;
The calm star clomb with constant will,
The restless meteor flashed and paled!

Skilled in its subtlest wile, he knew
And owned the higher ends of Law;
Still rose majestic on his view
The awful Shape the schoolman saw.

Her home the heart of God; her voice
The choral harmonies whereby
The stars, through all their spheres, rejoice,
The rhythmic rule of earth and sky!

We saw his great powers misapplied
To poor ambitions; yet, through all,
We saw him take the weaker side,
And right the wronged, and free the thrall.

Now, looking o'er the frozen North,
For one like him in word and act,
To call her old, free spirit forth,
And give her faith the life of fact,—

To break her party bonds of shame,
And labor with the zeal of him
To make the Democratic name
Of Liberty the synonyme,—

We sweep the land from hill to strand,
We seek the strong, the wise, the brave,
And, sad of heart, return to stand
In silence by a new-made grave!

There, where his breezy hills of home
Look out upon his sail-white seas,
The sounds of winds and waters come,
And shape themselves to words like these:

'Why, murmuring, mourn that he, whose power
Was lent to Party over-long,
Heard the still whisper at the hour
He set his foot on Party wrong?

'The human life that closed so well
No lapse of folly now can stain:
The lips whence Freedom's protest fell
No meaner thought can now profane.

'Mightier than living voice his grave
That lofty protest utters o'er;
Through roaring wind and smiting wave
It speaks his hate of wrong once more.

'Men of the North! your weak regret
Is wasted here; arise and pay
To freedom and to him your debt,
By following where he led the way!'

1853.

WILLIAM FORSTER.

William Forster, of Norwich, England, died in East Tennessee, in the 1st month, 1854, while engaged in presenting to the governors of the States of this Union the address of his religious society on the evils of slavery. He was the relative and coadjutor of the Buxtons, Gurneys, and Frys; and his whole life, extending almost to threescore and ten years, was a pure and beautiful example of Christian benevolence. He had travelled over Europe, and visited most of its sovereigns, to plead against the slave-trade and slavery; and had twice before made visits to this country, under impressions of religious duty. He was the father of the Right Hon. William Edward Forster. He visited my father's house in Haverhill during his first tour in the United States.

THE years are many since his hand
Was laid upon my head,
Too weak and young to understand
The serious words he said.

Yet often now the good man's look
Before me seems to swim,
As if some inward feeling took
The outward guise of him.

As if, in passion's heated war,
Or near temptation's charm,
Through him the low-voiced monitor
Forewarned me of the harm.

Stranger and pilgrim! from that day
Of meeting, first and last,
Wherever Duty's pathway lay,
His reverent steps have passed.

The poor to feed, the lost to seek,
To proffer life to death,
Hope to the erring,—to the weak
The strength of his own faith.

To plead the captive's right; remove
The sting of hate from Law;
And soften in the fire of love
The hardened steel of War

He walked the dark world, in the mild,
Still guidance of the Light;
In tearful tenderness a child,
A strong man in the right.

From what great perils, on his way,
He found, in prayer, release;
Through what abysmal shadows lay
His pathway unto peace,

God knoweth: we could only see
The tranquil strength he gained;
The bondage lost in liberty,
The fear in love unfeigned.

And I,—my youthful fancies grown
The habit of the man,
Whose field of life by angels sown
The wilding vines o'erran,—

Low bowed in silent gratitude,
My manhood's heart enjoys
That reverence for the pure and good
Which blessed the dreaming boy's.

Still shines the light of holy lives
Like star-beams over doubt;
Each sainted memory, Christlike, drives
Some dark possession out.

O friend! O brother! not in vain
Thy life so calm and true,
The silver dropping of the rain,
The fall of summer dew!

How many burdened hearts have prayed
Their lives like thine might be!
But more shall pray henceforth for aid
To lay them down like thee.

With weary hand, yet steadfast will,
In old age as in youth,
Thy Master found thee sowing still
The good seed of His truth.

As on thy task-field closed the day
In golden-skied decline,
His angel met thee on the way,
And lent his arm to thine.

Thy latest care for man,—thy last
Of earthly thought a prayer,—
Oh, who thy mantle, backward cast,
Is worthy now to wear?

Methinks the mound which marks thy bed
Might bless our land and save,
As rose, of old, to life the dead
Who touched the prophet's grave!

1854.

TO CHARLES SUMNER.

If I have seemed more prompt to censure wrong
Than praise the right; if seldom to thine ear
My voice hath mingled with the exultant cheer
Borne upon all our Northern winds along;
If I have failed to join the fickle throng
In wide-eyed wonder, that thou standest strong
In victory, surprised in thee to find
Brougham's scathing power with Canning's grace combined;
That he, for whom the ninefold Muses sang,
From their twined arms a giant athlete sprang,
Barbing the arrows of his native tongue
With the spent shafts Latona's archer flung,
To smite the Python of our land and time,
Fell as the monster born of Crissa's slime,
Like the blind bard who in Castalian springs
Tempered the steel that clove the crest of kings,
And on the shrine of England's freedom laid
The gifts of Cumæ and of Delphi's shade,—
Small need hast thou of words of praise from me.
Thou knowest my heart, dear friend, and well canst guess
That, even though silent, I have not the less
Rejoiced to see thy actual life agree
With the large future which I shaped for thee,
When, years ago, beside the summer[42] sea,
White in the moon, we saw the long waves fall
Baffled and broken from the rocky wall,
That, to the menace of the brawling flood,
Opposed alone its massive quietude,
Calm as a fate; with not a leaf nor vine
Nor birch-spray trembling in the still moonshine,
Crowning it like God's peace. I sometimes think
That night-scene by the sea prophetical
(For Nature speaks in symbols and in signs,
And through her pictures human fate divines),
That rock, wherefrom we saw the billows sink
In murmuring rout, uprising clear and tall
In the white light of heaven, the type of one

Who, momently by Error's host assailed,
Stands strong as Truth, in greaves of granite mailed;
And, tranquil-fronted, listening over all
The tumult, hears the angels say, Well done!

1854.

BURNS.

ON RECEIVING A SPRIG OF HEATHER IN BLOSSOM.

No more these simple flowers belong
To Scottish maid and lover;
Sown in the common soil of song,
They bloom the wide world over.

In smiles and tears, in sun and showers,
The minstrel and the heather,
The deathless singer and the flowers
He sang of live together.

Wild heather-bells and Robert Burns!
The moorland flower and peasant!
How, at their mention, memory turns
Her pages old and pleasant!

The gray sky wears again its gold
And purple of adorning,
And manhood's noonday shadows hold
The dews of boyhood's morning.

The dews that washed the dust and soil
From off the wings of pleasure,
The sky, that flecked the ground of toil
With golden threads of leisure.

I call to mind the summer day,
The early harvest mowing,
The sky with sun and clouds at play,
And flowers with breezes blowing.

I hear the blackbird in the corn,
The locust in the haying;
And, like the fabled hunter's horn,
Old tunes my heart is playing.

How oft that day, with fond delay,
I sought the maple's shadow,
And sang with Burns the hours away,
Forgetful of the meadow!

Bees hummed, birds twittered, overhead
I heard the squirrels leaping,
The good dog listened while I read,
And wagged his tail in keeping.

I watched him while in sportive mood
I read '*The Two Dogs*' story,
And half believed he understood
The poet's allegory.

Sweet day, sweet songs! The golden hours
Grew brighter for that singing,
From brook and bird and meadow flowers
A dearer welcome bringing.

New light on home-seen Nature beamed,
New glory over Woman;
And daily life and duty seemed
No longer poor and common.

I woke to find the simple truth
Of fact and feeling better
Than all the dreams that held my youth
A still repining debtor:

That Nature gives her handmaid, Art,
The themes of sweet discoursing;
The tender idyls of the heart
In every tongue rehearsing.

Why dream of lands of gold and pearl,
Of loving knight and lady,
When farmer boy and barefoot girl
Were wandering there already?

I saw through all familiar things
The romance underlying;
The joys and griefs that plume the wings
Of Fancy skyward flying.

I saw the same blithe day return,
The same sweet fall of even,
That rose on wooded Craigie-burn,
And sank on crystal Devon.

I matched with Scotland's heathery hills
The sweetbrier and the clover;
With Ayr and Doon, my native rills,
Their wood-hymns chanting over.

O'er rank and pomp, as he had seen,
I saw the Man uprising;
No longer common or unclean,
The child of God's baptizing!

With clearer eyes I saw the worth
Of life among the lowly;
The Bible at his Cotter's hearth
Had made my own more holy.

And if at times an evil strain,
To lawless love appealing,
Broke in upon the sweet refrain
Of pure and healthful feeling,

It died upon the eye and ear,
No inward answer gaining;
No heart had I to see or hear
The discord and the staining.

Let those who never erred forget
His worth, in vain bewailings;
Sweet Soul of Song! I own my debt
Uncancelled by his failings!

Lament who will the ribald line
Which tells his lapse from duty,
How kissed the maddening lips of wine
Or wanton ones of beauty;

But think, while falls that shade between
The erring one and Heaven,
That he who loved like Magdalen,
Like her may be forgiven.

Not his the song whose thunderous chime
Eternal echoes render;
The mournful Tuscan's haunted rhyme,
And Milton's starry splendor!

But who his human heart has laid
To Nature's bosom nearer?
Who sweetened toil like him, or paid
To love a tribute dearer?

Through all his tuneful art, how strong
The human feeling gushes!
The very moonlight of his song
Is warm with smiles and blushes!

Give lettered pomp to teeth of Time,
So 'Bonnie Doon' but tarry;
Blot out the Epic's stately rhyme,
But spare his Highland Mary!

1854.

TO GEORGE B. CHEEVER.

So spake Esaias: so, in words of flame,
Tekoa's prophet-herdsman smote with blame
The traffickers in men, and put to shame,
All earth and heaven before,
The sacerdotal robbers of the poor.

All the dread Scripture lives for thee again,
To smite like lightning on the hands profane
Lifted to bless the slave-whip and the chain.
Once more the old Hebrew tongue
Bends with the shafts of God a bow new-strung!

Take up the mantle which the prophets wore;
Warn with their warnings, show the Christ once more
Bound, scourged, and crucified in His blameless poor;
And shake above our land
The unquenched bolts that blazed in Hosea's hand!

Not vainly shalt thou cast upon our years
The solemn burdens of the Orient seers,
And smite with truth a guilty nation's ears.
Mightier was Luther's word
Than Seckingen's mailed arm or Hutton's sword!

1858.

TO JAMES T. FIELDS.

ON A BLANK LEAF OF 'POEMS PRINTED, NOT PUBLISHED.'

Well thought! who would not rather hear
The songs to Love and Friendship sung
Than those which move the stranger's tongue,
And feed his unselected ear?

Our social joys are more than fame;
  Life withers in the public look.
  Why mount the pillory of a book,
Or barter comfort for a name?

Who in a house of glass would dwell,
  With curious eyes at every pane?
  To ring him in and out again,
Who wants the public crier's bell?

To see the angel in one's way,
  Who wants to play the ass's part,—
  Bear on his back the wizard Art,
And in his service speak or bray?

And who his manly locks would shave,
  And quench the eyes of common sense,
  To share the noisy recompense
That mocked the shorn and blinded slave?

The heart has needs beyond the head,
  And, starving in the plenitude
  Of strange gifts, craves its common food,—
Our human nature's daily bread.

We are but men: no gods are we,
  To sit in mid-heaven, cold and bleak,
  Each separate, on his painful peak,
Thin-cloaked in self-complacency!

Better his lot whose axe is swung
  In Wartburg's woods, or that poor girl's
  Who by the Ilm her spindle whirls
And sings the songs that Luther sung,

Than his who, old, and cold, and vain,
  At Weimar sat, a demigod,
  And bowed with Jove's imperial nod
His votaries in and out again!

Ply, Vanity, thy wingëd feet!
  Ambition, hew thy rocky stair!
  Who envies him who feeds on air
The icy splendor of his seat?

I see your Alps, above me, cut
  The dark, cold sky; and dim and lone
  I see ye sitting,—stone on stone,—
With human senses dulled and shut.

I could not reach you, if I would,
  Nor sit among your cloudy shapes;
  And (spare the fable of the grapes
And fox) I would not if I could.

Keep to your lofty pedestals!
  The safer plain below I choose:
  Who never wins can rarely lose,
Who never climbs as rarely falls.

Let such as love the eagle's scream
  Divide with him his home of ice:
  For me shall gentler notes suffice,—
The valley-song of bird and stream;

The pastoral bleat, the drone of bees,
  The flail-beat chiming far away,
  The cattle-low, at shut of day,
The voice of God in leaf and breeze!

Then lend thy hand, my wiser friend,
  And help me to the vales below,
  (In truth, I have not far to go,)
Where sweet with flowers the fields extend.

1858.

THE MEMORY OF BURNS.

Read at the Boston celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, 25th, 1st mo., 1859. In my absence these lines were read by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

How sweetly come the holy psalms
  From saints and martyrs down,
The waving of triumphal palms
  Above the thorny crown!
The choral praise, the chanted prayers
  From harps by angels strung,
The hunted Cameron's mountain airs,
  The hymns that Luther sung!

Yet, jarring not the heavenly notes,
  The sounds of earth are heard,
As through the open minster floats
  The song of breeze and bird!
Not less the wonder of the sky
  That daisies bloom below;
The brook sings on, though loud and high
  The cloudy organs blow!

And, if the tender ear be jarred
That, haply, hears by turns
The saintly harp of Olney's bard,
The pastoral pipe of Burns,
No discord mars His perfect plan
Who gave them both a tongue;
For he who sings the love of man
The love of God hath sung!

To-day be every fault forgiven
Of him in whom we joy!
We take, with thanks, the gold of Heaven
And leave the earth's alloy.
Be ours his music as of spring,
His sweetness as of flowers,
The songs the bard himself might sing
In holier ears than ours.

Sweet airs of love and home, the hum
Of household melodies,
Come singing, as the robins come
To sing in door-yard trees.
And, heart to heart, two nations lean,
No rival wreaths to twine,
But blending in eternal green
The holly and the pine!

1859.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF JOSEPH STURGE.

In the fair land o'erwatched by Ischia's mountains,
Across the charmëd bay
Whose blue waves keep with Capri's silver fountains
Perpetual holiday,

A king lies dead, his wafer duly eaten,
His gold-bought masses given;
And Rome's great altar smokes with gums to sweeten
Her foulest gift to Heaven.

And while all Naples thrills with mute thanksgiving,
The court of England's queen
For the dead monster so abhorred while living
In mourning garb is seen.

With a true sorrow God rebukes that feigning;
By lone Edgbaston's side
Stands a great city in the sky's sad raining,
Bareheaded and wet-eyed!

Silent for once the restless hive of labor,
Save the low funeral tread,
Or voice of craftsman whispering to his neighbor
The good deeds of the dead.

For him no minster's chant of the immortals
Rose from the lips of sin;
No mitred priest swung back the heavenly portals
To let the white soul in.

But Age and Sickness framed their tearful faces
In the low hovel's door,
And prayers went up from all the dark by-places
And Ghettos of the poor.

The pallid toiler and the negro chattel,
The vagrant of the street,
The human dice wherewith in games of battle
The lords of earth compete,

Touched with a grief that needs no outward draping,
All swelled the long lament,
Of grateful hearts, instead of marble, shaping
His viewless monument!

For never yet, with ritual pomp and splendor,
In the long heretofore,
A heart more loyal, warm, and true, and tender,
Has England's turf closed o'er.

And if there fell from out her grand old steeples
No crash of brazen wail,
The murmurous woe of kindreds, tongues, and peoples
Swept in on every gale.

It came from Holstein's birchen-belted meadows,
And from the tropic calms
Of Indian islands in the sun-smit shadows
Of Occidental palms;

From the locked roadsteads of the Bothnian peasants,
And harbors of the Finn,
Where war's worn victims saw his gentle presence
Come sailing, Christ-like, in,

To seek the lost, to build the old waste places,
To link the hostile shores
Of severing seas, and sow with England's daisies
The moss of Finland's moors.

Thanks for the good man's beautiful example,
Who in the vilest saw
Some sacred crypt or altar of a temple
Still vocal with God's law;

And heard with tender ear the spirit sighing
As from its prison cell,
Praying for pity, like the mournful crying
Of Jonah out of hell.

Not his the golden pen's or lip's persuasion,
But a fine sense of right,
And Truth's directness, meeting each occasion
Straight as a line of light.

His faith and works, like streams that intermingle,
In the same channel ran:
The crystal clearness of an eye kept single
Shamed all the frauds of man.

The very gentlest of all human natures
He joined to courage strong,
And love outreaching unto all God's creatures
With sturdy hate of wrong.

Tender as woman, manliness and meekness
In him were so allied
That they who judged him by his strength or weakness
Saw but a single side.

Men failed, betrayed him, but his zeal seemed nourished
By failure and by fall;
Still a large faith in human-kind he cherished,
And in God's love for all.

And now he rests: his greatness and his sweetness
No more shall seem at strife;
And death has moulded into calm completeness
The statue of his life.

Where the dews glisten and the songbirds warble,
His dust to dust is laid,
In Nature's keeping, with no pomp of marble
To shame his modest shade.

The forges glow, the hammers all are ringing;
Beneath its smoky veil,
Hard by, the city of his love is swinging
Its clamorous iron flail.

But round his grave are quietude and beauty,
And the sweet heaven above,—
The fitting symbols of a life of duty
Transfigured into love!

1859.

BROWN OF OSSAWATOMIE.

John Brown of Ossawatomie spake on his dying day:
'I will not have to shrive my soul a priest in Slavery's pay.
But let some poor slave-mother whom I have striven to free,
With her children, from the gallows-stair put up a prayer for me!'

John Brown of Ossawatomie, they led
him out to die;
And lo! a poor slave-mother with her
little child pressed nigh.
Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and
the old harsh face grew mild,
As he stooped between the jeering ranks
and kissed the negro's child!

The shadows of his stormy life that mo-
ment fell apart;
And they who blamed the bloody hand
forgave the loving heart.
That kiss from all its guilty means re-
deemed the good intent,
And round the grisly fighter's hair the
martyr's aureole bent!

Perish with him the folly that seeks
through evil good!
Long live the generous purpose unstained
with human blood!
Not the raid of midnight terror, but the
thought which underlies;
Not the borderer's pride of daring, but
the Christian's sacrifice.

Nevermore may yon Blue Ridges the
Northern rifle hear,
Nor see the light of blazing homes flash
on the negro's spear.
But let the free-winged angel Truth their
guarded passes scale,
To teach that right is more than might,
and justice more than mail!

So vainly shall Virginia set her battle in
array;
In vain her trampling squadrons knead
the winter snow with clay.
She may strike the pouncing eagle, but
she dares not harm the dove;
And every gate she bars to Hate shall
open wide to Love!

1859.

NAPLES.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT C. WATERSTON, OF BOSTON.

Helen Waterston died at Naples in her eighteenth year, and lies buried in the Protestant cemetery there. The stone over her grave bears the lines,

> Fold her, O Father, in Thine arms,
> And let her henceforth be
> A messenger of love between
> Our human hearts and Thee.

I GIVE thee joy!—I know to thee
The dearest spot on earth must be
Where sleeps thy loved one by the summer sea;

Where, near her sweetest poet's tomb,
The land of Virgil gave thee room
To lay thy flower with her perpetual bloom.

I know that when the sky shut down
Behind thee on the gleaming town,
On Baiæ's baths and Posilippo's crown;

And, through thy tears, the mocking day
Burned Ischia's mountain lines away,
And Capri melted in its sunny bay;

Through thy great farewell sorrow shot
The sharp pang of a bitter thought
That slaves must tread around that holy spot.

Thou knewest not the land was blest
In giving thy beloved rest,
Holding the fond hope closer to her breast

That every sweet and saintly grave
Was freedom's prophecy, and gave
The pledge of Heaven to sanctify and save.

That pledge is answered. To thy ear
The unchained city sends its cheer,
And, tuned to joy, the muffled bells of fear

Ring Victor in. The land sits free
And happy by the summer sea,
And Bourbon Naples now is Italy!

She smiles above her broken chain
The languid smile that follows pain,
Stretching her cramped limbs to the sun again.

Oh, joy for all, who hear her call
From gray Camaldoli's convent-wall
And Elmo's towers to freedom's carnival!

A new life breathes among her vines
And olives, like the breath of pines
Blown downward from the breezy Apennines.

Lean, O my friend, to meet that breath,
Rejoice as one who witnesseth
Beauty from ashes rise, and life from death!

Thy sorrow shall no more be pain,
Its tears shall fall in sunlit rain,
Writing the grave with flowers: 'Arisen again!'

1860.

A MEMORIAL.

Moses Austin Cartland, a dear friend and relation, who led a faithful life as a teacher, and died in the summer of 1863.

Oh, thicker, deeper, darker growing,
The solemn vista to the tomb
Must know henceforth another shadow,
And give another cypress room.

In love surpassing that of brothers,
We walked, O friend, from childhood's day;
And, looking back o'er fifty summers,
Our footprints track a common way.

One in our faith, and one our longing
To make the world within our reach
Somewhat the better for our living,
And gladder for our human speech.

Thou heard'st with me the far-off voices,
The old beguiling song of fame,
But life to thee was warm and present,
And love was better than a name.

To homely joys and loves and friendships
Thy genial nature fondly clung;
And so the shadow on the dial
Ran back and left thee always young.

And who could blame the generous weakness
Which, only to thyself unjust,
So overprized the worth of others,
And dwarfed thy own with self-distrust?

All hearts grew warmer in the presence
Of one who, seeking not his own,
Gave freely for the love of giving,
Nor reaped for self the harvest sown.

Thy greeting smile was pledge and prelude
Of generous deeds and kindly words;
In thy large heart were fair guest-chambers,
Open to sunrise and the birds!

The task was thine to mould and fashion
Life's plastic newness into grace:
To make the boyish heart heroic,
And light with thought the maiden's face.

O'er all the land, in town and prairie,
With bended heads of mourning, stand
The living forms that owe their beauty
And fitness to thy shaping hand.

Thy call has come in ripened manhood,
The noonday calm of heart and mind,
While I, who dreamed of thy remaining
To mourn me, linger still behind:

Live on, to own, with self-upbraiding,
A debt of love still due from me,—
The vain remembrance of occasions,
Forever lost, of serving thee.

It was not mine among thy kindred
To join the silent funeral prayers,
But all that long sad day of summer
My tears of mourning dropped with theirs.

All day the sea-waves sobbed with sorrow,
The birds forgot their merry trills:
All day I heard the pines lamenting
With thine upon thy homestead hills.

Green be those hillside pines forever,
And green the meadowy lowlands be,
And green the old memorial beeches,
Name-carven in the woods of Lee!

Still let them greet thy life companions
Who thither turn their pilgrim feet,
In every mossy line recalling
A tender memory sadly sweet.

O friend! if thought and sense avail not
To know thee henceforth as thou art,
That all is well with thee forever
I trust the instincts of my heart.

Thine be the quiet habitations,
Thine the green pastures, blossom-sown,
And smiles of saintly recognition,
As sweet and tender as thy own.

Thou com'st not from the hush and shadow
To meet us, but to thee we come;
With thee we never can be strangers,
And where thou art must still be home.

1863.

BRYANT ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

Mr. Bryant's seventieth birthday, November 3, 1864, was celebrated by a festival to which these verses were sent.

We praise not now the poet's art,
The rounded beauty of his song;
Who weighs him from his life apart
Must do his nobler nature wrong.

Not for the eye, familiar grown
With charms to common sight denied,—
The marvellous gift he shares alone
With him who walked on Rydal-side;

Not for rapt hymn nor woodland lay,
Too grave for smiles, too sweet for tears;
We speak his praise who wears to-day
The glory of his seventy years.

When Peace brings Freedom in her train,
Let happy lips his songs rehearse;
His life is now his noblest strain,
His manhood better than his verse!

Thank God! his hand on Nature's keys
Its cunning keeps at life's full span;
But, dimmed and dwarfed, in times like these,
The poet seems beside the man!

So be it! let the garlands die,
The singer's wreath, the painter's meed,
Let our names perish, if thereby
Our country may be saved and freed!

1864.

THOMAS STARR KING.

Published originally as a prelude to the posthumous volume of selections edited by Richard Frothingham.

The great work laid upon his twoscore years
Is done, and well done. If we drop our tears,
Who loved him as few men were ever loved,
We mourn no blighted hope nor broken plan
With him whose life stands rounded and approved
In the full growth and stature of a man.
Mingle, O bells, along the Western slope,
With your deep toll a sound of faith and hope!
Wave cheerily still, O banner, half-way down,
From thousand-masted bay and steepled town!
Let the strong organ with its loftiest swell
Lift the proud sorrow of the land, and tell
That the brave sower saw his ripened grain.
O East and West! O morn and sunset twain
No more forever!—has he lived in vain
Who, priest of Freedom, made ye one, and told
Your bridal service from his lips of gold?

1864.

LINES ON A FLY-LEAF.

[Suggested by the book *A New Atmosphere*, by Gail Hamilton. The other friends referred to in the lines are Lydia Maria Child, Grace Greenwood, Anna E. Dickinson and Mrs. Stowe.]

I NEED not ask thee, for my sake,
To read a book which well may make
Its way by native force of wit
Without my manual sign to it.
Its piquant writer needs from me
No gravely masculine guaranty,
And well might laugh her merriest laugh
At broken spears in her behalf;
Yet, spite of all the critics tell,
I frankly own I like her well.
It may be that she wields a pen
Too sharply nibbed for thin-skinned men,
That her keen arrows search and try
The armor joints of dignity,
And, though alone for error meant,
Sing through the air irreverent.
I blame her not, the young athlete
Who plants her woman's tiny feet,
And dares the chances of debate
Where bearded men might hesitate,
Who, deeply earnest, seeing well
The ludicrous and laughable,
Mingling in eloquent excess
Her anger and her tenderness,
And, chiding with a half-caress,
Strives, less for her own sex than ours,
With principalities and powers,
And points us upward to the clear
Sunned heights of her new atmosphere.

Heaven mend her faults!—I will not pause
To weigh and doubt and peck at flaws,
Or waste my pity when some fool
Provokes her measureless ridicule.
Strong-minded is she? Better so
Than dulness set for sale or show,
A household folly, capped and belled
In fashion's dance of puppets held,
Or poor pretence of womanhood,
Whose formal, flavorless platitude
Is warranted from all offence
Of robust meaning's violence.
Give me the wine of thought whose bead
Sparkles along the page I read,—
Electric words in which I find
The tonic of the northwest wind;
The wisdom which itself allies
To sweet and pure humanities,
Where scorn of meanness, hate of wrong,
Are underlaid by love as strong;
The genial play of mirth that lights
Grave themes of thought, as when, on nights
Of summer-time, the harmless blaze
Of thunderless heat-lightning plays,
And tree and hill-top resting dim
And doubtful on the sky's vague rim,
Touched by that soft and lambent gleam,
Start sharply outlined from their dream.

Talk not to me of woman's sphere,
Nor point with Scripture texts a sneer,
Nor wrong the manliest saint of all
By doubt, if he were here, that Paul
Would own the heroines who have lent
Grace to truth's stern arbitrament,
Foregone the praise to woman sweet,
And cast their crowns at Duty's feet;
Like her, who by her strong Appeal
Made Fashion weep and Mammon feel,
Who, earliest summoned to withstand
The color-madness of the land,
Counted her life-long losses gain,
And made her own her sisters' pain;
Or her who, in her greenwood shade,
Heard the sharp call that Freedom made,
And, answering, struck from Sappho's lyre
Of love the Tyrtæan carmen's fire:
Or that young girl,—Domrémy's maid
Revived a nobler cause to aid,—
Shaking from warning finger-tips
The doom of her apocalypse;
Or her, who world-wide entrance gave
To the log-cabin of the slave,
Made all his want and sorrow known,
And all earth's languages his own.

1866.

GEORGE L. STEARNS.

No man rendered greater service to the cause of freedom than Major Stearns in the great struggle between invading slave-holders and the free settlers of Kansas.

He has done the work of a true man,—
Crown him, honor him, love him.
Weep over him, tears of woman,
Stoop manliest brows above him!

O dusky mothers and daughters,
Vigils of mourning keep for him!
Up in the mountains, and down by the waters,
Lift up your voices and weep for him!

For the warmest of hearts is frozen,
The freest of hands is still;
And the gap in our picked and chosen
The long years may not fill.

No duty could overtask him,
No need his will outrun;
Or ever our lips could ask him,
His hands the work had done.

He forgot his own soul for others,
Himself to his neighbor lending;
He found the Lord in his suffering brothers,
And not in the clouds descending.

So the bed was sweet to die on,
Whence he saw the doors wide swung
Against whose bolted iron
The strength of his life was flung.

And he saw ere his eye was darkened
The sheaves of the harvest-bringing,
And knew while his ear yet hearkened
The voice of the reapers singing.

Ah, well! The world is discreet;
There are plenty to pause and wait;
But here was a man who set his feet
Sometimes in advance of fate;

Plucked off the old bark when the inner
Was slow to renew it,
And put to the Lord's work the sinner
When saints failed to do it.

Never rode to the wrong's redressing
A worthier paladin.
Shall he not hear the blessing,
'Good and faithful, enter in!'

1867.

GARIBALDI.

In trance and dream of old, God's prophet saw
The casting down of thrones. Thou, watching lone
The hot Sardinian coast-line, hazy-hilled,
Where, fringing round Caprera's rocky zone
With foam, the slow waves gather and withdraw,
Behold'st the vision of the seer fulfilled,
And hear'st the sea-winds burdened with a sound
Of falling chains, as, one by one, unbound,
The nations lift their right hands up and swear
Their oath of freedom. From the chalk-white wall
Of England, from the black Carpathian range,
Along the Danube and the Theiss, through all
The passes of the Spanish Pyrenees,
And from the Seine's thronged banks, a murmur strange
And glad floats to thee o'er thy summer seas
On the salt wind that stirs thy whitening hair,—
The song of freedom's bloodless victories!
Rejoice, O Garibaldi! Though thy sword
Failed at Rome's gates, and blood seemed vainly poured
Where, in Christ's name, the crowned infidel
Of France wrought murder with the arms of hell
On that sad mountain slope whose ghostly dead,

Unmindful of the gray exorcist's ban,
Walk, unappeased, the chambered Vatican,
And draw the curtains of Napoleon's bed!
God's providence is not blind, but, full of eyes,
It searches all the refuges of lies;
And in His time and way, the accursed things
Before whose evil feet thy battle-gage
Has clashed defiance from hot youth to age
Shall perish. All men shall be priests and kings,
One royal brotherhood, one church made free
By love, which is the law of liberty!

1869.

TO LYDIA MARIA CHILD,

ON READING HER POEM IN 'THE STANDARD.'

Mrs. Child wrote her lines, beginning, 'Again the trees are clothed in vernal green,' May 24, 1859, on the first anniversary of Ellis Gray Loring's death, but did not publish them for some years afterward, when I first read them, or I could not have made the reference which I did to the extinction of slavery.

THE sweet spring day is glad with music,
But through it sounds a sadder strain;
The worthiest of our narrowing circle
Sings Loring's dirges o'er again.

O woman greatly loved! I join thee
In tender memories of our friend;
With thee across the awful spaces
The greeting of a soul I send!

What cheer hath he? How is it with him?
Where lingers he this weary while?
Over what pleasant fields of Heaven
Dawns the sweet sunrise of his smile?

Does he not know our feet are treading
The earth hard down on Slavery's grave?
That, in our crowning exultations,
We miss the charm his presence gave?

Why on this spring air comes no whisper
From him to tell us all is well?
Why to our flower-time comes no token
Of lily and of asphodel?

I feel the unutterable longing,
Thy hunger of the heart is mine;
I reach and grope for hands in darkness,
My ear grows sharp for voice or sign.

Still on the lips of all we question
The finger of God's silence lies;
Will the lost hands in ours be folded?
Will the shut eyelids ever rise?

O friend! no proof beyond this yearning,
This outreach of our hearts, we need;
God will not mock the hope He giveth,
No love He prompts shall vainly plead.

Then let us stretch our hands in darkness,
And call our loved ones o'er and o'er;
Some day their arms shall close about us,
And the old voices speak once more.

No dreary splendors wait our coming
Where rapt ghost sits from ghost apart;
Homeward we go to Heaven's thanksgiving,
The harvest-gathering of the heart.

1870.

THE SINGER.

This poem was written on the death of Alice Cary. Her sister Phœbe, heart-broken by her loss, followed soon after. Noble and richly gifted, lovely in person and character, they left behind them only friends and admirers.

YEARS since (but names to me before),
Two sisters sought at eve my door;
Two song-birds wandering from their nest,
A gray old farm-house in the West.

How fresh of life the younger one,
Half smiles, half tears, like rain in sun!
Her gravest mood could scarce displace
The dimples of her nut-brown face.

Wit sparkled on her lips not less
For quick and tremulous tenderness;
And, following close her merriest glance,
Dreamed through her eyes the heart's romance.

Timid and still, the elder had
Even then a smile too sweetly sad;
The crown of pain that all must wear
Too early pressed her midnight hair.

Yet ere the summer eve grew long,
Her modest lips were sweet with song;
A memory haunted all her words
Of clover-fields and singing birds.

Her dark, dilating eyes expressed
The broad horizons of the west;
Her speech dropped prairie flowers; the gold
Of harvest wheat about her rolled.

Fore-doomed to song she seemed to me:
I queried not with destiny:
I knew the trial and the need,
Yet, all the more, I said, God speed!

What could I other than I did?
Could I a singing-bird forbid?
Deny the wind-stirred leaf? Rebuke
The music of the forest brook?

She went with morning from my door,
But left me richer than before;
Thenceforth I knew her voice of cheer,
The welcome of her partial ear.

Years passed: through all the land her name
A pleasant household word became:
All felt behind the singer stood
A sweet and gracious womanhood.

Her life was earnest work, not play;
Her tired feet climbed a weary way;
And even through her lightest strain
We heard an undertone of pain.

Unseen of her her fair fame grew,
The good she did she rarely knew,
Unguessed of her in life the love
That rained its tears her grave above.

When last I saw her, full of peace,
She waited for her great release;
And that old friend so sage and bland,
Our later Franklin, held her hand.

For all that patriot bosoms stirs
Had moved that woman's heart of hers,
And men who toiled in storm and sun
Found her their meet companion.

Our converse, from her suffering bed
To healthful themes of life she led:
The out-door world of bud and bloom
And light and sweetness filled her room.

Yet evermore an underthought
Of loss to come within us wrought,
And all the while we felt the strain
Of the strong will that conquered pain.

God giveth quietness at last!
The common way that all have passed
She went, with mortal yearnings fond,
To fuller life and love beyond.

Fold the rapt soul in your embrace,
My dear ones! Give the singer place!
To you, to her,—I know not where,—
I lift the silence of a prayer.

For only thus our own we find;
The gone before, the left behind,
All mortal voices die between;
The unheard reaches the unseen.

Again the blackbirds sing; the streams
Wake, laughing, from their winter dreams,
And tremble in the April showers
The tassels of the maple flowers.

But not for her has spring renewed
The sweet surprises of the wood;
And bird and flower are lost to her
Who was their best interpreter!

What to shut eyes has God revealed?
What hear the ears that death has sealed?
What undreamed beauty passing show
Requites the loss of all we know?

O silent land, to which we move,
Enough if there alone be love,
And mortal need can ne'er outgrow
What it is waiting to bestow!

O white soul! from that far-off shore
Float some sweet song the waters o'er,
Our faith confirm, our fears dispel,
With the old voice we loved so well!

1871.

HOW MARY GREW.

These lines were in answer to an invitation to hear a lecture of Mary Grew, of Philadelphia, before the Boston Radical Club. The reference in the last stanza is to an essay on Sappho by T. W. Higginson, read at the club the preceding month.

WITH wisdom far beyond her years,
And graver than her wondering peers,
So strong, so mild, combining still
The tender heart and queenly will,
To conscience and to duty true,
So, up from childhood, Mary Grew!

Then in her gracious womanhood
She gave her days to doing good.
She dared the scornful laugh of men,
The hounding mob, the slanderer's pen.
She did the work she found to do,—
A Christian heroine, Mary Grew!

The freed slave thanks her; blessing comes
To her from women's weary homes;
The wronged and erring find in her
Their censor mild and comforter.
The world were safe if but a few
Could grow in grace as Mary Grew!

So, New Year's Eve, I sit and say,
By this low wood-fire, ashen gray;
Just wishing, as the night shuts down,
That I could hear in Boston town,
In pleasant Chestnut Avenue,
From her own lips, how Mary Grew!

And hear her graceful hostess tell
The silver-voiced oracle
Who lately through her parlors spoke
As through Dodona's sacred oak,
A wiser truth than any told
By Sappho's lips of ruddy gold,—
The way to make the world anew,
Is just to grow—as Mary Grew!

1871.

SUMNER.

'I am not one who has disgraced beauty of sentiment by deformity of conduct, or the maxims of a freeman by the actions of a slave; but, by the grace of God, I have kept my life unsullied.'—MILTON'S *Defence of the People of England.*

O MOTHER STATE! the winds of March
Blew chill o'er Auburn's Field of God,
Where, slow, beneath a leaden arch
Of sky, thy mourning children trod.

And now, with all thy woods in leaf,
Thy fields in flower, beside thy dead
Thou sittest, in thy robes of grief,
A Rachel yet uncomforted!

And once again the organ swells,
Once more the flag is half-way hung,
And yet again the mournful bells
In all thy steeple-towers are rung.

And I, obedient to thy will,
Have come a simple wreath to lay,
Superfluous, on a grave that still
Is sweet with all the flowers of May.

I take, with awe, the task assigned;
It may be that my friend might miss,
In his new sphere of heart and mind,
Some token from my hand in this.

By many a tender memory moved,
Along the past my thought I send;
The record of the cause he loved
Is the best record of its friend.

No trumpet sounded in his ear,
He saw not Sinai's cloud and flame,
But never yet to Hebrew seer
A clearer voice of duty came.

God said: 'Break thou these yokes; undo
These heavy burdens. I ordain
A work to last thy whole life through,
A ministry of strife and pain.

'Forego thy dreams of lettered ease,
Put thou the scholar's promise by,
The rights of man are more than these.'
He heard, and answered: 'Here am I!'

He set his face against the blast,
His feet against the flinty shard,
Till the hard service grew, at last,
Its own exceeding great reward.

Lifted like Saul's above the crowd,
Upon his kingly forehead fell
The first sharp bolt of Slavery's cloud,
Launched at the truth he urged so well.

Ah! never yet, at rack or stake,
Was sorer loss made Freedom's gain,
Than his, who suffered for her sake
The beak-torn Titan's lingering pain!

The fixed star of his faith, through all
Loss, doubt, and peril, shone the same;
As through a night of storm, some tall,
Strong lighthouse lifts its steady flame.

Beyond the dust and smoke he saw
The sheaves of Freedom's large increase,
The holy fanes of equal law,
The New Jerusalem of peace.

The weak might fear, the worldling mock,
The faint and blind of heart regret;
All knew at last th' eternal rock
On which his forward feet were set.

The subtlest scheme of compromise
Was folly to his purpose bold;
The strongest mesh of party lies
Weak to the simplest truth he told.

One language held his heart and lip,
Straight onward to his goal he trod,
And proved the highest statesmanship
Obedience to the voice of God.

No wail was in his voice,—none heard,
When treason's storm-cloud blackest grew,
The weakness of a doubtful word;
His duty, and the end, he knew.

The first to smite, the first to spare;
When once the hostile ensigns fell,
He stretched out hands of generous care
To lift the foe he fought so well.

For there was nothing base or small
Or craven in his soul's broad plan;
Forgiving all things personal,
He hated only wrong to man.

The old traditions of his State,
The memories of her great and good,
Took from his life a fresher date,
And in himself embodied stood.

How felt the greed of gold and place,
The venal crew that schemed and planned,
The fine scorn of that haughty face,
The spurning of that bribeless hand!

If than Rome's tribunes statelier
He wore his senatorial robe,
His lofty port was all for her,
The one dear spot on all the globe.

If to the master's plea he gave
The vast contempt his manhood felt,
He saw a brother in the slave,—
With man as equal man he dealt.

Proud was he? If his presence kept
Its grandeur wheresoe'er he trod,
As if from Plutarch's gallery stepped
The hero and the demigod,

None failed, at least, to reach his ear,
Nor want nor woe appealed in vain;
The homesick soldier knew his cheer,
And blessed him from his ward of pain.

Safely his dearest friends may own
The slight defects he never hid,
The surface-blemish in the stone
Of the tall, stately pyramid.

Suffice it that he never brought
His conscience to the public mart;
But lived himself the truth he taught,
White-souled, clean-handed, pure of heart.

What if he felt the natural pride
Of power in noble use, too true
With thin humilities to hide
The work he did, the lore he knew?

Was he not just? Was any wronged
By that assured self-estimate?
He took but what to him belonged,
Unenvious of another's state.

Well might he heed the words he spake,
And scan with care the written page
Through which he still shall warm and wake
The hearts of men from age to age.

Ah! who shall blame him now because
He solaced thus his hours of pain!
Should not the o'erworn thresher pause,
And hold to light his golden grain?

No sense of humor dropped its oil
On the hard ways his purpose went;
Small play of fancy lightened toil;
He spake alone the thing he meant.

He loved his books, the Art that hints
A beauty veiled behind its own,
The graver's line, the pencil's tints,
The chisel's shape evoked from stone.

He cherished, void of selfish ends,
The social courtesies that bless
And sweeten life, and loved his friends
With most unworldly tenderness.

But still his tired eyes rarely learned
The glad relief by Nature brought;
Her mountain ranges never turned
His current of persistent thought.

The sea rolled chorus to his speech
Three-banked like Latium's tall trireme,
With laboring oars; the grove and beach
Were Forum and the Academe.

The sensuous joy from all things fair
His strenuous bent of soul repressed,
And left from youth to silvered hair
Few hours for pleasure, none for rest.

For all his life was poor without,
O Nature, make the last amends!
Train all thy flowers his grave about,
And make thy singing-birds his friends!

Revive again, thou summer rain,
The broken turf upon his bed!
Breathe, summer wind, thy tenderest strain
Of low, sweet music overhead!

With calm and beauty symbolize
The peace which follows long annoy,
And lend our earth-bent, mourning eyes,
Some hint of his diviner joy.

For safe with right and truth he is,
As God lives he must live alway;
There is no end for souls like his,
No night for children of the day!

Nor cant nor poor solicitudes
Made weak his life's great argument;
Small leisure his for frames and moods
Who followed Duty where she went.

The broad, fair fields of God he saw
Beyond the bigot's narrow bound;
The truths he moulded into law
In Christ's beatitudes he found.

His state-craft was the Golden Rule,
His right of vote a sacred trust;
Clear, over threat and ridicule,
All heard his challenge: 'Is it just?'

And when the hour supreme had come,
Not for himself a thought he gave;
In that last pang of martyrdom,
His care was for the half-freed slave.

Not vainly dusky hands upbore,
In prayer, the passing soul to heaven
Whose mercy to His suffering poor
Was service to the Master given.

Long shall the good State's annals tell,
Her children's children long be taught,
How, praised or blamed, he guarded well
The trust he neither shunned nor sought.

If for one moment turned thy face,
O Mother, from thy son, not long
He waited calmly in his place
The sure remorse which follows wrong.

Forgiven be the State he loved
The one brief lapse, the single blot;
Forgotten be the stain removed,
Her righted record shows it not!

The lifted sword above her shield
With jealous care shall guard his fame;
The pine-tree on her ancient field
To all the winds shall speak his name.

The marble image of her son
Her loving hands shall yearly crown,
And from her pictured Pantheon
His grand, majestic face look down.

O State so passing rich before,
Who now shall doubt thy highest claim?
The world that counts thy jewels o'er
Shall longest pause at Sumner's name!

1874.

THIERS.

I.

Fate summoned, in gray-bearded age, to act
A history stranger than his written fact,
Him who portrayed the splendor and the gloom
Of that great hour when throne and altar fell
With long death-groan which still is audible.
He, when around the walls of Paris rung
The Prussian bugle like the blast of doom,
And every ill which follows unblest war
Maddened all France from Finistère to Var,
The weight of fourscore from his shoulders flung,
And guided Freedom in the path he saw
Lead out of chaos into light and law,
Peace, not imperial, but republican,
And order pledged to all the Rights of Man.

II.

Death called him from a need as imminent
As that from which the Silent William went
When powers of evil, like the smiting seas
On Holland's dikes, assailed her liberties.
Sadly, while yet in doubtful balance hung
The weal and woe of France, the bells were rung
For her lost leader. Paralyzed of will,
Above his bier the hearts of men stood still.
Then, as if set to his dead lips, the horn
Of Roland wound once more to rouse and warn,
The old voice filled the air! His last brave word
Not vainly France to all her boundaries stirred.
Strong as in life, he still for Freedom wrought,
As the dead Cid at red Toloso fought.

1877.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

AT THE UNVEILING OF HIS STATUE.

Among their graven shapes to whom
Thy civic wreaths belong,
O city of his love, make room
For one whose gift was song.

Not his the soldier's sword to wield,
Nor his the helm of state,
Nor glory of the stricken field,
Nor triumph of debate.

In common ways, with common men,
He served his race and time
As well as if his clerkly pen
Had never danced to rhyme.

If, in the thronged and noisy mart,
The Muses found their son,
Could any say his tuneful art
A duty left undone?

He toiled and sang; and year by year
Men found their homes more sweet,
And through a tenderer atmosphere
Looked down the brick-walled street.

The Greek's wild onset Wall Street knew;
The Red King walked Broadway;
And Alnwick Castle's roses blew
From Palisades to Bay.

Fair City by the Sea! upraise
His veil with reverent hands;
And mingle with thy own the praise
And pride of other lands.

Let Greece his fiery lyric breathe
Above her hero-urns;
And Scotland, with her holly, wreathe
The flower he culled for Burns.

Oh, stately stand thy palace walls,
Thy tall ships ride the seas;
To-day thy poet's name recalls
A prouder thought than these.

Not less thy pulse of trade shall beat,
Nor less thy tall fleets swim,
That shaded square and dusty street
Are classic ground through him.

Alive, he loved, like all who sing,
The echoes of his song;
Too late the tardy meed we bring,
The praise delayed so long.

Too late, alas! Of all who knew
The living man, to-day
Before his unveiled face, how few
Make bare their locks of gray!

Our lips of praise must soon be dumb,
Our grateful eyes be dim;
O brothers of the days to come,
Take tender charge of him!

New hands the wires of song may sweep,
New voices challenge fame;
But let no moss of years o'ercreep
The lines of Halleck's name.

1877.

WILLIAM FRANCIS BARTLETT.

Oh, well may Essex sit forlorn
Beside her sea-blown shore;
Her well beloved, her noblest born,
Is hers in life no more!

No lapse of years can render less
Her memory's sacred claim;
No fountain of forgetfulness
Can wet the lips of Fame.

A grief alike to wound and heal,
A thought to soothe and pain,
The sad, sweet pride that mothers feel
To her must still remain.

Good men and true she has not lacked,
And brave men yet shall be;
The perfect flower, the crowning fact,
Of all her years was he!

As Galahad pure, as Merlin sage,
What worthier knight was found
To grace in Arthur's golden age
The fabled Table Round?

A voice, the battle's trumpet-note,
To welcome and restore;
A hand, that all unwilling smote,
To heal and build once more!

A soul of fire, a tender heart
Too warm for hate, he knew
The generous victor's graceful part
To sheathe the sword he drew.

When Earth, as if on evil dreams,
Looks back upon her wars,
And the white light of Christ outstreams
From the red disk of Mars,

His fame who led the stormy van
Of battle well may cease,
But never that which crowns the man
Whose victory was Peace.

Mourn, Essex, on thy sea-blown shore
Thy beautiful and brave,
Whose failing hand the olive bore,
Whose dying lips forgave!

Let age lament the youthful chief,
And tender eyes be dim;
The tears are more of joy than grief
That fall for one like him!

1878.

BAYARD TAYLOR.

I.

'AND where now, Bayard, will thy footsteps tend?'
My sister asked our guest one winter's day.
Smiling he answered in the Friends' sweet way
Common to both: 'Wherever thou shalt send!
What wouldst thou have me see for thee?' She laughed,
Her dark eyes dancing in the wood-fire's glow:
'Loffoden isles, the Kilpis, and the low,
Unsetting sun on Finmark's fishing-craft.'
'All these and more I soon shall see for thee!'
He answered cheerily: and he kept his pledge
On Lapland snows, the North Cape's windy wedge,
And Tromsö freezing in its winter sea.
He went and came. But no man knows the track
Of his last journey, and he comes not back!

II.

He brought us wonders of the new and old;
We shared all climes with him. The Arab's tent
To him its story-telling secret lent.
And, pleased, we listened to the tales he told.
His task, beguiled with songs that shall endure,
In manly, honest thoroughness he wrought;
From humble home-lays to the heights of thought
Slowly he climbed, but every step was sure.
How, with the generous pride that friendship hath,
We, who so loved him, saw at last the crown
Of civic honor on his brows pressed down,
Rejoiced, and knew not that the gift was death.
And now for him, whose praise in deafened ears
Two nations speak, we answer but with tears!

III.

O Vale of Chester! trod by him so oft,
Green as thy June turf keep his memory. Let
Nor wood, nor dell, nor storied stream forget,
Nor winds that blow round lonely Cedarcroft;
Let the home voices greet him in the far
Strange land that holds him; let the messages
Of love pursue him o'er the chartless seas
And unmapped vastness of his unknown star!

Love's language, heard beyond the loud discourse
Of perishable fame, in every sphere
Itself interprets; and its utterance here
Somewhere in God's unfolding universe
Shall reach our traveller, softening the surprise
Of his rapt gaze on unfamiliar skies!

1879.

OUR AUTOCRAT.

Read at the breakfast given in honor of Dr. Holmes by the publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly*, December 3, 1879.

His laurels fresh from song and lay,
Romance, art, science, rich in all,
And young of heart, how dare we say
We keep his seventieth festival?

No sense is here of loss or lack;
Before his sweetness and his light
The dial holds its shadow back,
The charmed hours delay their flight.

His still the keen analysis
Of men and moods, electric wit,
Free play of mirth, and tenderness
To heal the slightest wound from it.

And his the pathos touching all
Life's sins and sorrows and regrets,
Its hopes and fears, its final call
And rest beneath the violets.

His sparkling surface scarce betrays
The thoughtful tide beneath it rolled,
The wisdom of the latter days,
And tender memories of the old.

What shapes and fancies, grave or gay,
Before us at his bidding come!
The Treadmill tramp, the One-Horse Shay,
The dumb despair of Elsie's doom!

The tale of Avis and the Maid,
The plea for lips that cannot speak,
The holy kiss that Iris laid
On Little Boston's pallid cheek!

Long may he live to sing for us
His sweetest songs at evening time,
And, like his Chambered Nautilus,
To holier heights of beauty climb!

Though now unnumbered guests surround
The table that he rules at will,
Its Autocrat, however crowned,
Is but our friend and comrade still.

The world may keep his honored name,
The wealth of all his varied powers;
A stronger claim has love than fame,
And he himself is only ours!

WITHIN THE GATE.

L. M. C.

I have more fully expressed my admiration and regard for Lydia Maria Child in the biographical introduction which I wrote for the volume of *Letters*, published after her death.

We sat together, last May-day, and talked
Of the dear friends who walked
Beside us, sharers of the hopes and fears
Of five and forty years,

Since first we met in Freedom's hope forlorn,
And heard her battle-horn
Sound through the valleys of the sleeping North,
Calling her children forth,

And youth pressed forward with hope-lighted eyes,
And age, with forecast wise
Of the long strife before the triumph won,
Girded his armor on.

Sadly, as name by name we called the roll,
We heard the dead-bells toll
For the unanswering many, and we knew
The living were the few.

And we, who waited our own call before
The inevitable door,
Listened and looked, as all have done, to win
Some token from within.

No sign we saw, we heard no voices call;
The impenetrable wall
Cast down its shadow, like an awful doubt,
On all who sat without.

Of many a hint of life beyond the veil,
And many a ghostly tale
Wherewith the ages spanned the gulf between
The seen and the unseen,

Seeking from omen, trance, and dream to gain
Solace to doubtful pain,
And touch, with groping hands, the garment hem
Of truth sufficing them,

We talked; and, turning from the sore unrest
Of an all-baffling quest,
We thought of holy lives that from us passed
Hopeful unto the last,

As if they saw beyond the river of death,
Like Him of Nazareth,
The many mansions of the Eternal days
Lift up their gates of praise.

And, hushed to silence by a reverent awe,
Methought, O friend, I saw
In thy true life of word, and work, and thought
The proof of all we sought.

Did we not witness in the life of thee
Immortal prophecy?
And feel, when with thee, that thy footsteps trod
An everlasting road?

Not for brief days thy generous sympathies,
Thy scorn of selfish ease;
Not for the poor prize of an earthly goal
Thy strong uplift of soul.

Than thine was never turned a fonder heart
To nature and to art
In fair-formed Hellas in her golden prime,
Thy Philothea's time.

Yet, loving beauty, thou couldst pass it by,
And for the poor deny
Thyself, and see thy fresh, sweet flower of fame
Wither in blight and blame.

Sharing His love who holds in His embrace
The lowliest of our race,
Sure the Divine economy must be
Conservative of thee!

For truth must live with truth, self-sacrifice
Seek out its great allies;
Good must find good by gravitation sure,
And love with love endure.

And so, since thou hast passed within the gate
Whereby awhile I wait,
I give blind grief and blinder sense the lie:
Thou hast not lived to die!

1881.

IN MEMORY.

JAMES T. FIELDS.

As a guest who may not stay
Long and sad farewells to say
Glides with smiling face away,

Of the sweetness and the zest
Of thy happy life possessed
Thou hast left us at thy best.

Warm of heart and clear of brain,
Of thy sun-bright spirit's wane
Thou hast spared us all the pain.

Now that thou hast gone away,
What is left of one to say
Who was open as the day?

What is there to gloss or shun?
Save with kindly voices none
Speak thy name beneath the sun.

Safe thou art on every side,
Friendship nothing finds to hide,
Love's demand is satisfied.

Over manly strength and worth,
At thy desk of toil, or hearth,
Played the lambent light of mirth,—

Mirth that lit, but never burned;
All thy blame to pity turned;
Hatred thou hadst never learned.

Every harsh and vexing thing
At thy home-fire lost its sting;
Where thou wast was always spring.

And thy perfect trust in good,
Faith in man and womanhood,
Chance and change and time withstood.

Small respect for cant and whine,
Bigot's zeal and hate malign,
Had that sunny soul of thine.

But to thee was duty's claim
Sacred, and thy lips became
Reverent with one holy Name.

Therefore, on thy unknown way,
Go in God's peace! We who stay
But a little while delay.

Keep for us, O friend, where'er
Thou art waiting, all that here
Made thy earthly presence dear;

Something of thy pleasant past
On a ground of wonder cast,
In the stiller waters glassed!

Keep the human heart of thee;
Let the mortal only be
Clothed in immortality.

And when fall our feet as fell
Thine upon the asphodel,
Let thy old smile greet us well;

Proving in a world of bliss
What we fondly dream in this,—
Love is one with holiness!

1881.

WILSON.

Read at the Massachusetts Club on the seventieth anniversary of the birthday of Vice-President Wilson, February 16, 1882.

The lowliest born of all the land,
He wrung from Fate's reluctant hand
The gifts which happier boyhood claims;
And, tasting on a thankless soil
The bitter bread of unpaid toil,
He fed his soul with noble aims.

And Nature, kindly provident,
To him the future's promise lent;
The powers that shape man's destinies,
Patience and faith and toil, he knew,
The close horizon round him grew
Broad with great possibilities.

By the low hearth-fire's fitful blaze
He read of old heroic days,
The sage's thought, the patriot's speech;
Unhelped, alone, himself he taught,
His school the craft at which he wrought,
His lore the book within his reach.

He felt his country's need; he knew
The work her children had to do;
And when, at last, he heard the call
In her behalf to serve and dare,
Beside his senatorial chair
He stood the unquestioned peer of all.

Beyond the accident of birth
He proved his simple manhood's worth;
Ancestral pride and classic grace
Confessed the large-brained artisan,
So clear of sight, so wise in plan
And counsel, equal to his place.

With glance intuitive he saw
Through all disguise of form and law,
And read men like an open book;
Fearless and firm, he never quailed
Nor turned aside for threats, nor failed
To do the thing he undertook

How wise, how brave, he was, how well
He bore himself, let history tell
While waves our flag o'er land and sea,
No black thread in its warp or weft;
He found dissevered States, he left
A grateful Nation, strong and free!

THE POET AND THE CHILDREN.

LONGFELLOW.

With a glory of winter sunshine
Over his locks of gray,
In the old historic mansion
He sat on his last birthday;

With his books and his pleasant pictures,
And his household and his kin,
While a sound as of myriads singing
From far and near stole in.

It came from his own fair city,
From the prairie's boundless plain,
From the Golden Gate of sunset,
And the cedarn woods of Maine.

And his heart grew warm within him,
And his moistening eyes grew dim,
For he knew that his country's children
Were singing the songs of him:

The lays of his life's glad morning,
The psalms of his evening time,
Whose echoes shall float forever
On the winds of every clime.

All their beautiful consolations,
Sent forth like birds of cheer,
Came flocking back to his windows,
And sang in the Poet's ear.

Grateful, but solemn and tender,
The music rose and fell
With a joy akin to sadness
And a greeting like farewell.

With a sense of awe he listened
To the voices sweet and young;
The last of earth and the first of heaven
Seemed in the songs they sung.

And waiting a little longer
For the wonderful change to come,
He heard the Summoning Angel,
Who calls God's children home!

And to him in a holier welcome
Was the mystical meaning given
Of the words of the blessed Master:
'Of such is the kingdom of heaven!'

1882.

A WELCOME TO LOWELL.

Take our hands, James Russell Lowell,
Our hearts are all thy own;
To-day we bid thee welcome
Not for ourselves alone.

In the long years of thy absence
Some of us have grown old,
And some have passed the portals
Of the Mystery untold;

For the hands that cannot clasp thee,
For the voices that are dumb,
For each and all I bid thee
A grateful welcome home!

For Cedarcroft's sweet singer
To the nine-fold Muses dear;
For the Seer the winding Concord
Paused by his door to hear;

For him, our guide and Nestor,
Who the march of song began,
The white locks of his ninety years
Bared to thy winds, Cape Ann!

For him who, to the music
Her pines and hemlocks played,
Set the old and tender story
Of the lorn Acadian maid;

For him, whose voice for freedom
Swayed friend and foe at will,
Hushed is the tongue of silver,
The golden lips are still!

For her whose life of duty
At scoff and menace smiled,
Brave as the wife of Roland,
Yet gentle as a Child.

And for him the three-hilled city
Shall hold in memory long,
Whose name is the hint and token
Of the pleasant Fields of Song!

For the old friends unforgotten,
For the young thou hast not known,
I speak their heart-warm greeting;
Come back and take thy own!

From England's royal farewells,
And honors fitly paid,
Come back, dear Russell Lowell,
To Elmwood's waiting shade!
Come home with all the garlands
That crown of right thy head.
I speak for comrades living,
I speak for comrades dead!

AMESBURY, *6th mo.*, 1885.

AN ARTIST OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

GEORGE FULLER.

HAUNTED of Beauty, like the marvellous youth
Who sang Saint Agnes' Eve! How passing fair
Her shapes took color in thy homestead air!
How on thy canvas even her dreams were truth!
Magician! who from commonest elements
Called up divine ideals, clothed upon
By mystic lights soft blending into one
Womanly grace and child-like innocence.
Teacher! thy lesson was not given in vain.
Beauty is goodness; ugliness is sin:
Art's place is sacred: nothing foul therein
May cra vl or tread with bestial feet profane.
If rightly choosing is the painter's test,
Thy choice, O master, ever was the best.

1885.

MULFORD.

Author of *The Nation* and *The Republic of God.*

UNNOTED as the setting of a star
He passed; and sect and party scarcely knew
When from their midst a sage and seer withdrew
To fitter audience, where the great dead are
In God's republic of the heart and mind,
Leaving no purer, nobler soul behind.

1886.

TO A CAPE ANN SCHOONER.

LUCK to the craft that bears this name of mine,
Good fortune follow with her golden spoon
The glazëd hat and tarry pantaloon;
And wheresoe'er her keel shall cut the brine,
Cod, hake and haddock quarrel for her line.
Shipped with her crew, whatever wind may blow,
Or tides delay, my wish with her shall go,
Fishing by proxy. Would that it might show
At need her course, in lack of sun and star,
Where icebergs threaten, and the sharp reefs are;
Lift the blind fog on Anticosti's lee
And Avalon's rock; make populous the sea
Round Grand Manan with eager finny swarms,
Break the long calms, and charm away the storms.

OAK KNOLL, *23, 3rd mo.*, 1886.

SAMUEL J. TILDEN.

GREYSTONE, AUG. 4, 1886.

ONCE more, O all-adjusting Death!
The nation's Pantheon opens wide;
Once more a common sorrow saith
A strong, wise man has died.

Faults doubtless had he. Had we not
Our own, to question and asperse
The worth we doubted or forgot
Until beside his hearse?

Ambitious, cautious, yet the man
To strike down fraud with resolute hand;
A patriot, if a partisan,
He loved his native land.

So let the mourning bells be rung,
The banner droop its folds half way,
And while the public pen and tongue
Their fitting tribute pay,

Shall we not vow above his bier
To set our feet on party lies,
And wound no more a living ear
With words that Death denies?

1886.

Occasional Poems

EVA.

Suggested by Mrs. Stowe's tale of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and written when the characters in the tale were realities by the fireside of countless American homes.

Dry the tears for holy Eva,
With the blessed angels leave her;
Of the form so soft and fair
Give to earth the tender care.

For the golden locks of Eva
Let the sunny south-land give her
Flowery pillow of repose,
Orange-bloom and budding rose.

In the better home of Eva
Let the shining ones receive her,
With the welcome-voicëd psalm,
Harp of gold and waving palm!

All is light and peace with Eva;
There the darkness cometh never;
Tears are wiped, and fetters fall,
And the Lord is all in all.

Weep no more for happy Eva,
Wrong and sin no more shall grieve her;
Care and pain and weariness
Lost in love so measureless.

Gentle Eva, loving Eva,
Child confessor, true believer,
Listener at the Master's knee,
'Suffer such to come to Me.'

Oh, for faith like thine, sweet Eva,
Lighting all the solemn river,
And the blessings of the poor
Wafting to the heavenly shore!

1852.

A LAY OF OLD TIME.

Written for the Essex County Agricultural Fair, and sung at the banquet at Newburyport, October 2, 1856.

One morning of the first sad Fall,
Poor Adam and his bride
Sat in the shade of Eden's wall—
But on the outer side.

She, blushing in her fig-leaf suit
For the chaste garb of old;
He, sighing o'er his bitter fruit
For Eden's drupes of gold.

Behind them, smiling in the morn,
Their forfeit garden lay,
Before them, wild with rock and thorn,
The desert stretched away.

They heard the air above them ranned,
A light step on the sward,
And lo! they saw before them stand
The angel of the Lord!

'Arise,' he said, 'why look behind,
When hope is all before,
And patient hand and willing mind,
Your loss may yet restore?

'I leave with you a spell whose power
Can make the desert glad,
And call around you fruit and flower
As fair as Eden had.

'I clothe your hands with power to lift
The curse from off your soil;
Your very doom shall seem a gift,
Your loss a gain through Toil.

'Go, cheerful as yon humming-bees,
To labor as to play.'
White glimmering over Eden's trees
The angel passed away.

The pilgrims of the world went forth
Obedient to the word,
And found where'er they tilled the earth
A garden of the Lord!

The thorn-tree cast its evil fruit
And blushed with plum and pear,
And seeded grass and trodden root
Grew sweet beneath their care.

We share our primal parents' fate,
And, in our turn and day,
Look back on Eden's sworded gate
As sad and lost as they.

But still for us his native skies
The pitying Angel leaves,
And leads through Toil to Paradise
New Adams and new Eves!

A SONG OF HARVEST.

For the Agricultural and Horticultural Exhibition at Amesbury and Salisbury, September 28, 1858.

THIS day, two hundred years ago,
The wild grape by the river's side,
And tasteless groundnut trailing low,
The table of the woods supplied.

Unknown the apple's red and gold,
The blushing tint of peach and pear;
The mirror of the Powow told
No tale of orchards ripe and rare.

Wild as the fruits he scorned to till,
These vales the idle Indian trod;
Nor knew the glad, creative skill,
The joy of him who toils with God.

O Painter of the fruits and flowers!
We thank Thee for thy wise design
Whereby these human hands of ours
In Nature's garden work with Thine.

And thanks that from our daily need
The joy of simple faith is born;
That he who smites the summer weed,
May trust Thee for the autumn corn.

Give fools their gold, and knaves their power;
Let fortune's bubbles rise and fall;
Who sows a field, or trains a flower,
Or plants a tree, is more than all.

For he who blesses most is blest;
And God and man shall own his worth
Who toils to leave as his bequest
An added beauty to the earth.

And, soon or late, to all that sow,
The time of harvest shall be given;
The flower shall bloom, the fruit shall grow,
If not on earth, at last in heaven.

KENOZA LAKE.

This beautiful lake in East Haverhill was the 'Great Pond' of the writer's boyhood. In 1859 a movement was made for improving its shores as a public park. At the opening of the park, August 31, 1859, the poem which gave it the name of Kenoza (in the Indian language signifying Pickerel) was read.

As Adam did in Paradise,
To-day the primal right we claim:
Fair mirror of the woods and skies,
We give to thee a name.

Lake of the pickerel!—let no more
The echoes answer back, 'Great Pond,'
But sweet Kenoza, from thy shore
And watching hills beyond,

Let Indian ghosts, if such there be
Who ply unseen their shadowy lines,
Call back the ancient name to thee,
As with the voice of pines.

The shores we trod as barefoot boys,
The nutted woods we wandered through,
To friendship, love, and social joys
We consecrate anew.

Here shall the tender song be sung,
And memory's dirges soft and low,
And wit shall sparkle on the tongue,
And mirth shall overflow,

Harmless as summer lightning plays
From a low, hidden cloud by night,
A light to set the hills ablaze,
But not a bolt to smite.

In sunny South and prairied West
Are exiled hearts remembering still,
As bees their hive, as birds their nest,
The homes of Haverhill.

They join us in our rites to-day;
And, listening, we may hear, erelong,
From inland lake and ocean bay,
The echoes of our song.

Kenoza! o'er no sweeter lake
Shall morning break or noon-cloud sail,—
No fairer face than thine shall take
The sunset's golden veil.

Long be it ere the tide of trade
Shall break with harsh-resounding din
The quiet of thy banks of shade,
And hills that fold thee in.

Still let thy woodlands hide the hare,
The shy loon sound his trumpet-note,
Wind-weary from his fields of air,
The wild-goose on thee float.

Thy peace rebuke our feverish stir,
Thy beauty our deforming strife;
Thy woods and waters minister
The healing of their life.

And sinless Mirth, from care released,
Behold, unawed, thy mirrored sky,
Smiling as smiled on Cana's feast
The Master's loving eye.

And when the summer day grows dim,
And light mists walk thy mimic sea,
Revive in us the thought of Him
Who walked on Galilee!

FOR AN AUTUMN FESTIVAL.

The Persian's flowery gifts, the shrine
Of fruitful Ceres, charm no more;
The woven wreaths of oak and pine
Are dust along the Isthmian shore.

But beauty hath its homage still,
And nature holds us still in debt;
And woman's grace and household skill,
And manhood's toil, are honored yet.

And we, to-day, amidst our flowers
And fruits, have come to own again
The blessings of the summer hours,
The early and the latter rain;

To see our Father's hand once more
Reverse for us the plenteous horn
Of autumn, filled and running o'er
With fruit, and flower, and golden corn!

Once more the liberal year laughs out
O'er richer stores than gems or gold;
Once more with harvest-song and shout
Is Nature's bloodless triumph told.

Our common mother rests and sings,
Like Ruth, among her garnered sheaves;
Her lap is full of goodly things,
Her brow is bright with autumn leaves.

Oh, favors every year made new!
Oh, gifts with rain and sunshine sent!
The bounty overruns our due,
The fulness shames our discontent.

We shut our eyes, the flowers bloom on;
We murmur, but the corn-ears fill,
We choose the shadow, but the sun
That casts it shines behind us still.

God gives us with our rugged soil
The power to make it Eden-fair,
And richer fruits to crown our toil
Than summer-wedded islands bear.

Who murmurs at his lot to-day?
Who scorns his native fruit and bloom?
Or sighs for dainties far away,
Beside the bounteous board of home?

Thank Heaven, instead, that Freedom's arm
Can change a rocky soil to gold,—
That brave and generous lives can warm
A clime with northern ices cold.

And let these altars, wreathed with flowers
And piled with fruits, awake again
Thanksgivings for the golden hours,
The early and the latter rain!

1859.

THE QUAKER ALUMNI.

Read at the Friends' School Anniversary, Providence, R. I., 6th mo., 1860.

From the well-springs of Hudson, the sea-cliffs of Maine,
Grave men, sober matrons, you gather again;
And, with hearts warmer grown as your heads grow more cool,
Play over the old game of going to school.

All your strifes and vexations, your whims and complaints,
(You were not saints yourselves, if the children of saints!)
All your petty self-seekings and rivalries done,
Round the dear Alma Mater your hearts beat as one!

How widely soe'er you have strayed from the fold,
Though your 'thee' has grown 'you,' and your drab blue and gold,
To the old friendly speech and the garb's sober form,
Like the heart of Argyle to the tartan, you warm.

But, the first greetings over, you glance round the hall;
Your hearts call the roll, but they answer not all:
Through the turf green above them the dead cannot hear;
Name by name, in the silence, falls sad as a tear!

In love, let us trust, they were summoned so soon
From the morning of life, while we toil through its noon;
They were frail like ourselves, they had needs like our own,
And they rest as we rest in God's mercy alone.

Unchanged by our changes of spirit and frame,
Past, now, and henceforward the Lord is the same;
Though we sink in the darkness, His arms break our fall,
And in death as in life, He is Father of all!

We are older: our footsteps, so light in the play
Of the far-away school-time, move slower to-day;—
Here a beard touched with frost, there a bald, shining crown,
And beneath the cap's border gray mingles with brown.

But faith should be cheerful, and trust should be glad,
And our follies and sins, not our years, make us sad.
Should the heart closer shut as the bonnet grows prim,
And the face grow in length as the hat grows in brim?

Life is brief, duty grave; but, with rain-folded wings,
Of yesterday's sunshine the grateful heart sings;
And we, of all others, have reason to pay
The tribute of thanks, and rejoice on our way;

For the counsels that turned from the follies of youth;
For the beauty of patience, the whiteness of truth;
For the wounds of rebuke, when love tempered its edge;
For the household's restraint, and the discipline's hedge;

For the lessons of kindness vouchsafed to the least
Of the creatures of God, whether human or beast,
Bringing hope to the poor, lending strength to the frail,
In the lanes of the city, the slave-hut, and jail;

For a womanhood higher and holier, by all
Her knowledge of good, than was Eve ere her fall,—
Whose task-work of duty moves lightly as play,
Serene as the moonlight and warm as the day;

And, yet more, for the faith which embraces the whole,
Of the creeds of the ages the life and the soul,
Wherein letter and spirit the same channel run,
And man has not severed what God has made one!

For a sense of the Goodness revealed everywhere,
As sunshine impartial, and free as the air;
For a trust in humanity, Heathen or Jew,
And a hope for all darkness the Light shineth through.

Who scoffs at our birthright?—the words of the seers,
And the songs of the bards in the twilight of years,
All the foregleams of wisdom in santon and sage,
In prophet and priest, are our true heritage.

The Word which the reason of Plato discerned;
The truth, as whose symbol the Mithra-fire burned;
The soul of the world which the Stoic but guessed,
In the Light Universal the Quaker confessed!

No honors of war to our worthies belong;
Their plain stem of life never flowered into song;
But the fountains they opened still gush by the way,
And the world for their healing is better to-day.

He who lies where the minster's groined arches curve down
To the tomb-crowded transept of England's renown,
The glorious essayist, by genius enthroned,
Whose pen as a sceptre the Muses all owned,—

Who through the world's pantheon walked in his pride,
Setting new statues up, thrusting old ones aside,
And in fiction the pencils of history dipped,
To gild o'er or blacken each saint in his crypt,—

How vainly he labored to sully with blame
The white bust of Penn, in the niche of his fame!
Self-will is self-wounding, perversity blind:
On himself fell the stain for the Quaker designed!

For the sake of his true-hearted father before him;
For the sake of the dear Quaker mother that bore him;
For the sake of his gifts, and the works that outlive him,
And his brave words for freedom, we freely forgive him!

There are those who take note that our numbers are small,—
New Gibbons who write our decline and our fall;
But the Lord of the seed-field takes care of His own,
And the world shall yet reap what our sowers have sown.

The last of the sect to his fathers may go,
Leaving only his coat for some Barnum to show;
But the truth will outlive him, and broaden with years,
Till the false dies away, and the wrong disappears.

Nothing fails of its end. Out of sight sinks the stone,
In the deep sea of time, but the circles sweep on,
Till the low-rippled murmurs along the shores run,
And the dark and dead waters leap glad in the sun.

Meanwhile shall we learn, in our ease, to forget
To the martyrs of Truth and of Freedom our debt?—
Hide their words out of sight, like the garb that they wore,
And for Barclay's Apology offer one more?

Shall we fawn round the priestcraft that glutted the shears,
And festooned the stocks with our grandfathers' ears?
Talk of Woolman's unsoundness? count Penn heterodox?
And take Cotton Mather in place of George Fox?

Make our preachers war-chaplains? quote Scripture to take
The hunted slave back, for Onesimus' sake?
Go to burning church-candles, and chanting in choir,
And on the old meeting-house stick up a spire?

No! the old paths we'll keep until better are shown,
Credit good where we find it, abroad or our own;
And while 'Lo here' and 'Lo there' the multitude call,
Be true to ourselves, and do justice to all.

The good round about us we need not refuse,
Nor talk of our Zion as if we were Jews;
But why shirk the badge which our fathers have worn,
Or beg the world's pardon for having been born?

We need not pray over the Pharisee's prayer,
Nor claim that our wisdom is Benjamin's share;
Truth to us and to others is equal and one:
Shall we bottle the free air, or hoard up the sun?

Well know we our birthright may serve but to show
How the meanest of weeds in the richest soil grow;
But we need not disparage the good which we hold;
Though the vessels be earthen, the treasure is gold!

Enough and too much of the sect and the name.
What matters our label, so truth be our aim?
The creed may be wrong, but the life may be true,
And hearts beat the same under drab coats or blue.

So the man be a man, let him worship, at will,
In Jerusalem's courts, or on Gerizim's hill.
When she makes up her jewels, what cares yon good town
For the Baptist of Wayland, the Quaker of Brown?

And this green, favored island, so fresh and sea-blown,
When she counts up the worthies her annals have known,
Never waits for the pitiful gaugers of sect
To measure her love, and mete out her respect.

Three shades at this moment seem walking her strand,
Each with head halo-crowned, and with palms in his hand,—
Wise Berkeley, grave Hopkins, and, smiling serene
On prelate and puritan, Channing is seen.

One holy name bearing, no longer they need
Credentials of party, and pass-words of creed:
The new song they sing hath a threefold accord,
And they own one baptism, one faith, and one Lord!

But the golden sands run out: occasions like these
Glide swift into shadow, like sails on the seas:
While we sport with the mosses and pebbles ashore,
They lessen and fade, and we see them no more.

Forgive me, dear friends, if my vagrant thoughts seem
Like a school-boy's who idles and plays with his theme.
Forgive the light measure whose changes display
The sunshine and rain of our brief April day.

There are moments in life when the lip and the eye
Try the question of whether to smile or to cry;
And scenes and reunions that prompt like our own
The tender in feeling, the playful in tone.

I, who never sat down with the boys and the girls
At the feet of your Slocums, and Cartlands, and Earles,—
By courtesy only permitted to lay
On your festival's altar my poor gift, to-day,—

I would joy in your joy: let me have a friend's part
In the warmth of your welcome of hand and of heart,—
On your play-ground of boyhood unbend the brow's care,
And shift the old burdens our shoulders must bear.

Long live the good School! giving out year by year
Recruits to true manhood and womanhood dear:
Brave boys, modest maidens, in beauty sent forth,
The living epistles and proof of its worth!

In and out let the young life as steadily flow
As in broad Narragansett the tides come and go;
And its sons and its daughters in prairie and town
Remember its honor, and guard its renown.

Not vainly the gift of its founder was made;
Not prayerless the stones of its corner were laid:
The blessing of Him whom in secret they sought
Has owned the good work which the fathers have wrought.

To Him be the glory forever! We bear
To the Lord of the Harvest our wheat with the tare.
What we lack in our work may He find in our will,
And winnow in mercy our good from the ill!

OUR RIVER.

FOR A SUMMER FESTIVAL AT 'THE LAURELS' ON THE MERRIMAC.

Jean Pierre Brissot, the famous leader of the Girondist party in the French Revolution, when a young man travelled extensively in the United States. He visited the valley of the Merrimac, and speaks in terms of admiration of the view from Moulton's hill opposite Amesbury. The 'Laurel Party' so called, was composed of ladies and gentlemen in the lower valley of the Merrimac, and invited friends and guests in other sections of the country. Its thoroughly enjoyable annual festivals were held in the early summer on the pine-shaded, laurel-blossomed slopes of the Newbury side of the river opposite Pleasant Valley in Amesbury. The several poems called out by these gatherings are here printed in sequence.

ONCE more on yonder laurelled height
The summer flowers have budded;
Once more with summer's golden light
The vales of home are flooded;
And once more, by the grace of Him
Of every good the Giver,
We sing upon its wooded rim
The praises of our river:

Its pines above, its waves below,
The west-wind down it blowing,
As fair as when the young Brissot
Beheld it seaward flowing,—
And bore its memory o'er the deep,
To soothe the martyr's sadness,
And fresco, in his troubled sleep,
His prison-walls with gladness.

We know the world is rich with streams
Renowned in song and story,
Whose music murmurs through our dreams
Of human love and glory:
We know that Arno's banks are fair,
And Rhine has castled shadows,
And, poet-tuned, the Doon and Ayr
Go singing down their meadows.

But while, unpictured and unsung
By painter or by poet,
Our river waits the tuneful tongue
And cunning hand to show it,—

We only know the fond skies lean
Above it, warm with blessing,
And the sweet soul of our Undine
Awakes to our caressing.

No fickle sun-god holds the flocks
That graze its shores in keeping;
No icy kiss of Dian mocks
The youth beside it sleeping:
Our Christian river loveth most
The beautiful and human;
The heathen streams of Naiads boast,
But ours of man and woman.

The miner in his cabin hears
The ripple we are hearing;
It whispers soft to homesick ears
Around the settler's clearing:
In Sacramento's vales of corn,
Or Santee's bloom of cotton,
Our river by its valley-born
Was never yet forgotten.

The drum rolls loud, the bugle fills
The summer air with clangor;
The war-storm shakes the solid hills
Beneath its tread of anger;
Young eyes that last year smiled in ours
Now point the rifle's barrel,
And hands then stained with fruits and flowers
Bear redder stains of quarrel.

But blue skies smile, and flowers bloom on,
And rivers still keep flowing,
The dear God still His rain and sun
On good and ill bestowing.
His pine-trees whisper, 'Trust and wait!'
His flowers are prophesying
That all we dread of change or fate
His love is underlying.

And thou, O Mountain-born!—no more
We ask the wise Allotter
Than for the firmness of thy shore,
The calmness of thy water,
The cheerful lights that overlay
Thy rugged slopes with beauty,
To match our spirits to our day
And make a joy of duty.

1861.

REVISITED.

Read at 'The Laurels,' on the Merrimac, 6th month, 1865.

THE roll of drums and the bugle's wailing
Vex the air of our vales no more;
The spear is beaten to hooks of pruning,
The share is the sword the soldier wore!

Sing soft, sing low, our lowland river,
Under thy banks of laurel bloom;
Softly and sweet, as the hour beseemeth,
Sing us the songs of peace and home.

Let all the tenderer voices of nature
Temper the triumph and chasten mirth,
Full of the infinite love and pity
For fallen martyr and darkened hearth.

But to Him who gives us beauty for ashes,
And the oil of joy for mourning long,
Let thy hills give thanks, and all thy waters
Break into jubilant waves of song!

Bring us the airs of hills and forests,
The sweet aroma of birch and pine,
Give us a waft of the north-wind laden
With sweetbrier odors and breath of kine!

Bring us the purple of mountain sunsets,
Shadows of clouds that rake the hills,
The green repose of thy Plymouth meadows,
The gleam and ripple of Campton rills.

Lead us away in shadow and sunshine,
Slaves of fancy, through all thy miles,
The winding ways of Pemigewasset,
And Winnipesaukee's hundred isles.

Shatter in sunshine over thy ledges,
Laugh in thy plunges from fall to fall;
Play with thy fringes of elms, and darken
Under the shade of the mountain wall.

The cradle-song of thy hillside fountains
Here in thy glory and strength repeat;
Give us a taste of thy upland music,
Show us the dance of thy silver feet.

Into thy dutiful life of uses
Pour the music and weave the flowers:
With the song of birds and bloom of meadows
Lighten and gladden thy heart and ours.

Sing on! bring down, O lowland river,
The joy of the hills to the waiting sea;
The wealth of the vales, the pomp of mountains,
The breath of the woodlands, bear with thee.

Here, in the calm of thy seaward valley,
Mirth and labor shall hold their truce;
Dance of water and mill of grinding,
Both are beauty and both are use.

Type of the Northland's strength and glory,
Pride and hope of our home and race,—
Freedom lending to rugged labor
Tints of beauty and lines of grace.

Once again, O beautiful river,
Hear our greetings and take our thanks;
Hither we come, as Eastern pilgrims
Throng to the Jordan's sacred banks.

For though by the Master's feet untrodden,
Though never His word has stilled thy waves,
Well for us may thy shores be holy,
With Christian altars and saintly graves.

And well may we own thy hint and token
Of fairer valleys and streams than these,
Where the rivers of God are full of water,
And full of sap are His healing trees!

'THE LAURELS.'

At the twentieth and last anniversary.

FROM these wild rocks I look to-day
O'er leagues of dancing waves, and see
The far, low coast-line stretch away
To where our river meets the sea.

The light wind blowing off the land
Is burdened with old voices; through
Shut eyes I see how lip and hand
The greeting of old days renew.

O friends whose hearts still keep their prime,
Whose bright example warms and cheers,
Ye teach us how to smile at Time,
And set to music all his years!

I thank you for sweet summer days,[43]
For pleasant memories lingering long,
For joyful meetings, fond delays,
And ties of friendship woven strong.

As for the last time, side by side,
You tread the paths familiar grown,
I reach across the severing tide,
And blend my farewells with your own.

Make room, O river of our home!
For other feet in place of ours,
And in the summers yet to come,
Make glad another Feast of Flowers!

Hold in thy mirror, calm and deep,
The pleasant pictures thou hast seen;
Forget thy lovers not, but keep
Our memory like thy laurels green.

ISLES OF SHOALS, *7th mo.*, 1870.

JUNE ON THE MERRIMAC.

O DWELLERS in the stately towns,
What come ye out to see?
This common earth, this common sky,
This water flowing free?

As gayly as these kalmia flowers
Your door-yard blossoms spring;
As sweetly as these wild-wood birds
Your cagëd minstrels sing.

You find but common bloom and green,
The rippling river's rune,
The beauty which is everywhere
Beneath the skies of June;

The Hawkswood oaks, the storm-torn plumes
Of old pine-forest kings,
Beneath whose century-woven shade
Deer Island's mistress sings.

And here are pictured Artichoke,
And Curson's bowery mill;
And Pleasant Valley smiles between
The river and the hill.

You know full well these banks of bloom,
The upland's wavy line,
And how the sunshine tips with fire
The needles of the pine.

Yet, like some old remembered psalm,
Or sweet, familiar face,
Not less because of commonness
You love the day and place.

And not in vain in this soft air
Shall hard-strung nerves relax,
Not all in vain the o'erworn brain
Forego its daily tax.

The lust of power, the greed of gain
Have all the year their own;
The haunting demons well may let
Our one bright day alone.

Unheeded let the newsboy call,
Aside the ledger lay:
The world will keep its treadmill step
Though we fall out to-day.

The truants of life's weary school,
Without excuse from thrift
We change for once the gains of toil
For God's unpurchased gift.

From ceilëd rooms, from silent books,
From crowded car and town,
Dear Mother Earth, upon thy lap
We lay our tired heads down.

Cool, summer wind, our heated brows;
Blue river, through the green
Of clustering pines, refresh the eyes
Which all too much have seen.

For us these pleasant woodland ways
Are thronged with memories old,
Have felt the grasp of friendly hands
And heard love's story told.

A sacred presence overbroods
The earth whereon we meet;
These winding forest-paths are trod
By more than mortal feet.

Old friends called from us by the voice
Which they alone could hear,
From mystery to mystery,
From life to life, draw near.

More closely for the sake of them
Each other's hands we press;
Our voices take from them a tone
Of deeper tenderness.

Our joy is theirs, their trust is ours,
Alike below, above,
Or here or there, about us fold
The arms of one great love!

We ask to-day no countersign,
No party names we own;
Unlabelled, individual,
We bring ourselves alone.

What cares the unconventioned wood
For pass-words of the town?
The sound of fashion's shibboleth
The laughing waters drown.

Here cant forgets his dreary tone,
And care his face forlorn;
The liberal air and sunshine laugh
The bigot's zeal to scorn.

From manhood's weary shoulder falls
His load of selfish cares;
And woman takes her rights as flowers
And brooks and birds take theirs.

The license of the happy woods,
The brook's release are ours;
The freedom of the unshamed wind
Among the glad-eyed flowers.

Yet here no evil thought finds place,
Nor foot profane comes in;
Our grove, like that of Samothrace,
Is set apart from sin.

We walk on holy ground; above
A sky more holy smiles;
The chant of the beatitudes
Swells down these leafy aisles.

Thanks to the gracious Providence
That brings us here once more;
For memories of the good behind
And hopes of good before!

And if, unknown to us, sweet days
Of June like this must come,
Unseen of us these laurels clothe
The river-banks with bloom;

And these green paths must soon be trod
By other feet than ours,
Full long may annual pilgrims come
To keep the Feast of Flowers;

The matron be a girl once more,
The bearded man a boy,
And we, in heaven's eternal June,
Be glad for earthly joy!

1876.

HYMN

FOR THE OPENING OF THOMAS STARR KING'S HOUSE OF WORSHIP, 1864.

The poetic and patriotic preacher, who had won fame in the East, went to California in 1860 and became a power on the Pacific coast. It was not long after the opening of the house of worship built for him that he died.

Amidst these glorious works of Thine,
The solemn minarets of the pine,
And awful Shasta's icy shrine,—

Where swell Thy hymns from wave and gale,
And organ-thunders never fail,
Behind the cataract's silver veil,—

Our puny walls to Thee we raise,
Our poor reed-music sounds Thy praise:
Forgive, O Lord, our childish ways!

For, kneeling on these altar-stairs,
We urge Thee not with selfish prayers,
Nor murmur at our daily cares.

Before Thee, in an evil day,
Our country's bleeding heart we lay,
And dare not ask Thy hand to stay;
But, through the war-cloud, pray to Thee
For union, but a union free,
With peace that comes of purity!

That Thou wilt bare Thy arm to save
And, smiting through this Red Sea wave,
Make broad a pathway for the slave!

For us, confessing all our need,
We trust nor rite nor word nor deed,
Nor yet the broken staff of creed.

Assured alone that Thou art good
To each, as to the multitude,
Eternal Love and Fatherhood,—

Weak, sinful, blind, to Thee we kneel,
Stretch dumbly forth our hands, and feel
Our weakness is our strong appeal.

So, by these Western gates of Even
We wait to see with Thy forgiven
The opening Golden Gate of Heaven!

Suffice it now. In time to be
Shall holier altars rise to Thee,—
Thy Church our broad humanity!

White flowers of love its walls shall climb,
Soft bells of peace shall ring its chime,
Its days shall all be holy time.

A sweeter song shall then be heard,—
The music of the world's accord
Confessing Christ, the Inward Word!

That song shall swell from shore to shore,
One hope, one faith, one love, restore
The seamless robe that Jesus wore.

HYMN

FOR THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP AT GEORGETOWN, ERECTED IN MEMORY OF A MOTHER.[44]

The giver of the house was the late George Peabody, of London.

THOU dwellest not, O Lord of all!
In temples which Thy children raise;
Our work to Thine is mean and small,
And brief to Thy eternal days.

Forgive the weakness and the pride,
If marred thereby our gift may be,
For love, at least, has sanctified
The altar that we rear to Thee.

The heart and not the hand has wrought
From sunken base to tower above
The image of a tender thought,
The memory of a deathless love!

And though should never sound of speech
Or organ echo from its wall,
Its stones would pious lessons teach,
Its shade in benedictions fall.

Here should the dove of peace be found,
And blessings and not curses given;
Nor strife profane, nor hatred wound
The mingled loves of earth and heaven.

Thou, who didst soothe with dying breath
The dear one watching by Thy cross,
Forgetful of the pains of death
In sorrow for her mighty loss,

In memory of that tender claim,
O Mother-born, the offering take,
And make it worthy of Thy name,
And bless it for a mother's sake!

1868.

A SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION.

Read at the President's Levee, Brown University, 29th, 6th month, 1870.

TO-DAY the plant by Williams set
Its summer bloom discloses;
The wilding sweetbrier of his prayers
Is crowned with cultured roses.

Once more the Island State repeats
The lesson that he taught her,
And binds his pearl of charity
Upon her brown-locked daughter.

Is 't fancy that he watches still
His Providence plantations?
That still the careful Founder takes
A part on these occasions?

Methinks I see that reverend form,
Which all of us so well know:
He rises up to speak; he jogs
The presidential elbow.

'Good friends,' he says, 'you reap a field
I sowed in self-denial,
For toleration had its griefs
And charity its trial.

'Great grace, as saith Sir Thomas More,
To him must needs be given
Who heareth heresy and leaves
The heretic to Heaven!

'I hear again the snuffled tones,
I see in dreary vision
Dyspeptic dreamers, spiritual bores,
And prophets with a mission.

'Each zealot thrust before my eyes
His Scripture-garbled label;
All creeds were shouted in my ears
As with the tongues of Babel.

'Scourged at one cart-tail, each denied
The hope of every other;
Each martyr shook his branded fist
At the conscience of his brother!

'How cleft the dreary drone of man
The shriller pipe of woman,
As Gorton led his saints elect,
Who held all things in common!

'Their gay robes trailed in ditch and swamp,
And torn by thorn and thicket,
The dancing-girls of Merry Mount
Came dragging to my wicket.

'Shrill Anabaptists, shorn of ears;
Gray witch-wives, hobbling slowly;
And Antinomians, free of law,
Whose very sins were holy.

'Hoarse ranters, crazed Fifth Monarchists,
Of stripes and bondage braggarts,
Pale Churchmen, with singed rubrics snatched
From Puritanic fagots.

'And last, not least, the Quakers came,
With tongues still sore from burning,
The Bay State's dust from off their feet
Before my threshold spurning;

'A motley host, the Lord's *débris*,
Faith's odds and ends together;
Well might I shrink from guests with lungs
Tough as their breeches leather:

'If, when the hangman at their heels
Came, rope in hand to catch them,
I took the hunted outcasts in,
I never sent to fetch them.

'I fed, but spared them not a whit;
I gave to all who walked in,
Not clams and succotash alone,
But stronger meat of doctrine.

'I proved the prophets false, I pricked
The bubble of perfection,
And clapped upon their inner light
The snuffers of election.

'And looking backward on my times,
This credit I am taking;
I kept each sectary's dish apart,
No spiritual chowder making.

'Where now the blending signs of sect
Would puzzle their assorter,
The dry-shod Quaker kept the land,
The Baptist held the water.

'A common coat now serves for both.
The hat's no more a fixture;
And which was wet and which was dry,
Who knows in such a mixture?

'Well! He who fashioned Peter's dream
To bless them all is able;
And bird and beast and creeping thing
Make clean upon His table!

'I walked by my own light; but when
The ways of faith divided,
Was I to force unwilling feet
To tread the path that I did?

'I touched the garment-hem of truth,
Yet saw not all its splendor;
I knew enough of doubt to feel
For every conscience tender.

'God left men free of choice, as when
His Eden-trees were planted;
Because they chose amiss, should I
Deny the gift He granted?

'So, with a common sense of need,
Our common weakness feeling,
I left them with myself to God
And His all-gracious dealing!

'I kept His plan whose rain and sun
To tare and wheat are given;
And if the ways to hell were free,
I left them free to heaven!'

Take heart with us, O man of old,
Soul-freedom's brave confessor,
So love of God and man wax strong,
Let sect and creed be lesser.

The jarring discords of thy day
In ours one hymn are swelling;
The wandering feet, the severed paths
All seek our Father's dwelling.

And slowly learns the world the truth
That makes us all thy debtor,—
That holy life is more than rite,
And spirit more than letter;

That they who differ pole-wide serve
Perchance the common Master,
And other sheep He hath than they
Who graze one narrow pasture!

For truth's worst foe is he who claims
To act as God's avenger,
And deems, beyond his sentry-beat,
The crystal walls in danger!

Who sets for heresy his traps
Of verbal quirk and quibble,
And weeds the garden of the Lord
With Satan's borrowed dibble.

To-day our hearts like organ keys
One Master's touch are feeling;
The branches of a common Vine
Have only leaves of healing.

Co-workers, yet from varied fields,
We share this restful nooning;
The Quaker with the Baptist here
Believes in close communing.

Forgive, dear saint, the playful tone,
Too light for thy deserving;
Thanks for thy generous faith in man,
Thy trust in God unswerving.

Still echo in the hearts of men
The words that thou hast spoken;
No forge of hell can weld again
The fetters thou hast broken.

The pilgrim needs a pass no more
From Roman or Genevan;
Thought-free, no ghostly tollman keeps
Henceforth the road to Heaven!

CHICAGO.

The great fire at Chicago was on 8–10 October, 1871.

Men said at vespers: 'All is well!'
In one wild night the city fell;
Fell shrines of prayer and marts of gain
Before the fiery hurricane.

On threescore spires had sunset shone,
Where ghastly sunrise looked on none.
Men clasped each other's hands, and said:
'The City of the West is dead!'

Brave hearts who fought, in slow retreat,
The fiends of fire from street to street,
Turned, powerless, to the blinding glare,
The dumb defiance of despair.

A sudden impulse thrilled each wire
That signalled round that sea of fire;
Swift words of cheer, warm heart-throbs came;
In tears of pity died the flame!

From East, from West, from South and North,
The messages of hope shot forth,
And, underneath the severing wave,
The world, full-handed, reached to save.

Fair seemed the old; but fairer still
The new, the dreary void shall fill
With dearer homes than those o'erthrown,
For love shall lay each corner-stone.

Rise, stricken city! from thee throw
The ashen sackcloth of thy woe;
And build, as to Amphion's strain,
To songs of cheer thy walls again!

How shrivelled in thy hot distress
The primal sin of selfishness!
How instant rose, to take thy part,
The angel in the human heart!

Ah! not in vain the flames that tossed
Above thy dreadful holocaust;
The Christ again has preached through thee
The Gospel of Humanity!

Then lift once more thy towers on high,
And fret with spires the western sky,
To tell that God is yet with us,
And love is still miraculous!

1871.

KINSMAN.

Died at the Island of Panay (Philippine group), aged nineteen years.

Where ceaseless Spring her garland twines,
As sweetly shall the loved one rest,
As if beneath the whispering pines
And maple shadows of the West.

Ye mourn, O hearts of home! for him,
But, haply, mourn ye not alone;
For him shall far-off eyes be dim,
And pity speak in tongues unknown.

There needs no graven line to give
The story of his blameless youth;
All hearts shall throb intuitive,
And nature guess the simple truth.

The very meaning of his name
Shall many a tender tribute win;
The stranger own his sacred claim,
And all the world shall be his kin.

And there, as here, on main and isle,
The dews of holy peace shall fall,
The same sweet heavens above him smile,
And God's dear love be over all!

1874.

THE GOLDEN WEDDING OF LONGWOOD.

Longwood, not far from Bayard Taylor's birthplace in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, was the home of my esteemed friends John and Hannah Cox, whose golden wedding was celebrated in 1874.

With fifty years between you and your well-kept wedding vow,
The Golden Age, old friends of mine, is not a fable now.

And, sweet as has life's vintage been through all your pleasant past,
Still, as at Cana's marriage-feast, the best wine is the last!

Again before me, with your names, fair Chester's landscape comes,
Its meadows, woods, and ample barns, and quaint, stone-builded homes.

The smooth-shorn vales, the wheaten slopes, the boscage green and soft,
Of which their poet sings so well from towered Cedarcroft.

And lo! from all the country-side come neighbors, kith and kin;
From city, hamlet, farm-house old, the wedding guests come in.

And they who, without scrip or purse, mob-hunted, travel-worn,
In Freedom's age of martyrs came, as victors now return.

Older and slower, yet the same, files in the long array,
And hearts are light and eyes are glad, though heads are badger-gray.

The fire-tried men of Thirty-eight who saw with me the fall,
Midst roaring flames and shouting mob, of Pennsylvania Hall;

And they of Lancaster who turned the
cheeks of tyrants pale,
Singing of freedom through the grates of
Moyamensing jail!

And haply with them, all unseen, old
comrades, gone before,
Pass, silently as shadows pass, within
your open door,—

The eagle face of Lindley Coates, brave
Garrett's daring zeal,
The Christian grace of Pennock, the
steadfast heart of Neal.

Ah me! beyond all power to name, the
worthies tried and true,
Grave men, fair women, youth and maid,
pass by in hushed review.

Of varying faiths, a common cause fused
all their hearts in one.
God give them now, whate'er their names,
the peace of duty done!

How gladly would I tread again the old-
remembered places,
Sit down beside your hearth once more
and look in the dear old faces!

And thank you for the lessons your fifty
years are teaching,
For honest lives that louder speak than
half our noisy preaching;

For your steady faith and courage in
that dark and evil time,
When the Golden Rule was treason, and
to feed the hungry crime;

For the poor slave's house of refuge when
the hounds were on his track,
And saint and sinner, church and state,
joined hands to send him back.

Blessings upon you!—What you did for
each sad, suffering one,
So homeless, faint, and naked, unto our
Lord was done!

Fair fall on Kennett's pleasant vales and
Longwood's bowery ways
The mellow sunset of your lives, friends
of my early days.

May many more of quiet years be added
to your sum,
And, late at last, in tenderest love, the
beckoning angel come.

Dear hearts are here, dear hearts are
there, alike below, above;
Our friends are now in either world, and
love is sure of love.

1874.

HYMN

FOR THE OPENING OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA.

All things are Thine: no gift have we,
Lord of all gifts, to offer Thee;
And hence with grateful hearts to-day,
Thy own before Thy feet we lay.

Thy will was in the builders' thought;
Thy hand unseen amidst us wrought;
Through mortal motive, scheme and plan,
Thy wise eternal purpose ran.

No lack Thy perfect fulness knew;
For human needs and longings grew
This house of prayer, this home of rest,
In the fair garden of the West.

In weakness and in want we call
On Thee for whom the heavens are small;
Thy glory is Thy children's good,
Thy joy Thy tender Fatherhood.

O Father! deign these walls to bless,
Fill with Thy love their emptiness,
And let their door a gateway be
To lead us from ourselves to Thee!

1872.

LEXINGTON.

1775.

No Berserk thirst of blood had they,
No battle-joy was theirs, who set
Against the alien bayonet
Their homespun breasts in that old day,

Their feet had trodden peaceful ways;
They loved not strife, they dreaded pain;
They saw not, what to us is plain,
That God would make man's wrath His praise.

No seers were they, but simple men;
Its vast results the future hid:
The meaning of the work they did
Was strange and dark and doubtful then.

Swift as their summons came they left
The plough mid-furrow standing still,
The half-ground corn grist in the mill,
The spade in earth, the axe in cleft.

They went where duty seemed to call,
They scarcely asked the reason why;
They only knew they could but die,
And death was not the worst of all!

Of man for man the sacrifice,
All that was theirs to give, they gave.
The flowers that blossomed from their grave
Have sown themselves beneath all skies.

Their death-shot shook the feudal tower,
And shattered slavery's chain as well;
On the sky's dome, as on a bell,
Its echo struck the world's great hour.

That fateful echo is not dumb:
The nations listening to its sound
Wait, from a century's vantage-ground,
The holier triumphs yet to come,—

The bridal time of Law and Love,
The gladness of the world's release,
When, war-sick, at the feet of Peace
The hawk shall nestle with the dove!—

The golden age of brotherhood
Unknown to other rivalries
Than of the mild humanities,
And gracious interchange of good,

When closer strand shall lean to strand,
Till meet, beneath saluting flags,
The eagle of our mountain-crags,
The lion of our Motherland!

1875.

THE LIBRARY.

Sung at the opening of the Haverhill Library, November 11, 1875.

'LET there be light!' God spake of old,
And over chaos dark and cold,
And through the dead and formless frame
Of nature, life and order came.

Faint was the light at first that shone
On giant fern and mastodon,
On half-formed plant and beast of prey,
And man as rude and wild as they.

Age after age, like waves, o'erran
The earth, uplifting brute and man;
And mind, at length, in symbols dark
Its meanings traced on stone and bark.

On leaf of palm, on sedge-wrought roll;
On plastic clay and leathern scroll,
Man wrote his thoughts; the ages passed,
And lo! the Press was found at last!

Then dead souls woke; the thoughts of men
Whose bones were dust revived again;
The cloister's silence found a tongue,
Old prophets spake, old poets sung.

And here, to-day, the dead look down,
The kings of mind again we crown;
We hear the voices lost so long,
The sage's word, the sibyl's song.

Here Greek and Roman find themselves
Alive along these crowded shelves;
And Shakespeare treads again his stage,
And Chaucer paints anew his age.

As if some Pantheon's marbles broke
Their stony trance, and lived and spoke,
Life thrills along the alcoved hall,
The lords of thought await our call!

'I WAS A STRANGER, AND YE TOOK ME IN.'

An incident in St. Augustine, Florida.

'NEATH skies that winter never knew
The air was full of light and balm,
And warm and soft the Gulf wind blew
Through orange bloom and groves of palm.

A stranger from the frozen North,
Who sought the fount of health in vain,
Sank homeless on the alien earth,
And breathed the languid air with pain.

God's angel came! The tender shade
Of pity made her blue eye dim;
Against her woman's breast she laid
The drooping, fainting head of him.

She bore him to a pleasant room,
Flower-sweet and cool with salt sea air,
And watched beside his bed, for whom
His far-off sisters might not care.

She fanned his feverish brow and smoothed
Its lines of pain with tenderest touch.
With holy hymn and prayer she soothed
The trembling soul that feared so much.

Through her the peace that passeth sight
Came to him, as he lapsed away
As one whose troubled dreams of night
Slide slowly into tranquil day.

The sweetness of the Land of Flowers
Upon his lonely grave she laid:
The jasmine dropped its golden showers,
The orange lent its bloom and shade.

And something whispered in her thought,
More sweet than mortal voices be:
'The service thou for him hast wrought
O daughter! hath been done for Me.'

1875.

CENTENNIAL HYMN.

Written for the opening of the International Exhibition, Philadelphia, May 10, 1876. The music for the hymn was written by John K. Paine, and may be found in *The Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1876.

I.

OUR fathers' God! from out whose hand
The centuries fall like grains of sand,
We meet to-day, united, free,
And loyal to our land and Thee,
To thank Thee for the era done,
And trust Thee for the opening one.

II.

Here, where of old, by Thy design,
The fathers spake that word of Thine
Whose echo is the glad refrain
Of rended bolt and falling chain,
To grace our festal time, from all
The zones of earth our guests we call.

III.

Be with us while the New World greets
The Old World thronging all its streets,
Unveiling all the triumphs won
By art or toil beneath the sun;
And unto common good ordain
This rivalship of hand and brain.

IV.

Thou, who hast here in concord furled
The war flags of a gathered world,
Beneath our Western skies fulfil
The Orient's mission of good-will,
And, freighted with love's Golden Fleece,
Send back its Argonauts of peace.

V.

For art and labor met in truce,
For beauty made the bride of use,
We thank Thee; but, withal, we crave
The austere virtues strong to save,
The honor proof to place or gold,
The manhood never bought nor sold!

VI.

Oh make Thou us, through centuries long,
In peace secure, in justice strong;
Around our gift of freedom draw
The safeguards of Thy righteous law:
And, cast in some diviner mould,
Let the new cycle shame the old!

AT SCHOOL-CLOSE.

BOWDOIN STREET, BOSTON, 1877.

THE end has come, as come it must
To all things; in these sweet June days
The teacher and the scholar trust
Their parting feet to separate ways.

They part: but in the years to be
Shall pleasant memories cling to each,
As shells bear inland from the sea
The murmur of the rhythmic beach.

One knew the joy the sculptor knows
When, plastic to his lightest touch,
His clay-wrought model slowly grows
To that fine grace desired so much.

So daily grew before her eyes
The living shapes whereon she wrought,
Strong, tender, innocently wise,
The child's heart with the woman's thought.

And one shall never quite forget
The voice that called from dream and play,
The firm but kindly hand that set
Her feet in learning's pleasant way,—

The joy of Undine soul-possessed,
The wakening sense, the strange delight
That swelled the fabled statue's breast
And filled its clouded eyes with sight!

O Youth and Beauty, loved of all!
Ye pass from girlhood's gate of dreams;
In broader ways your footsteps fall,
Ye test the truth of all that seems.

Her little realm the teacher leaves,
She breaks her wand of power apart,
While, for your love and trust, she gives
The warm thanks of a grateful heart.

Hers is the sober summer noon
Contrasted with your morn of spring,
The waning with the waxing moon,
The folded with the outspread wing.

Across the distance of the years
She sends her God-speed back to you;
She has no thought of doubts or fears:
Be but yourselves, be pure, be true,

And prompt in duty; heed the deep,
Low voice of conscience; through the ill
And discord round about you, keep
Your faith in human nature still.

Be gentle: unto griefs and needs,
Be pitiful as woman should,
And, spite of all the lies of creeds,
Hold fast the truth that God is good.

Give and receive; go forth and bless
The world that needs the hand and heart
Of Martha's helpful carefulness
No less than Mary's better part.

So shall the stream of time flow by
And leave each year a richer good,
And matron loveliness outvie
The nameless charm of maidenhood.

And, when the world shall link your names
With gracious lives and manners fine,
The teacher shall assert her claims,
And proudly whisper, 'These were mine!'

HYMN OF THE CHILDREN.

Sung at the anniversary of the Children's Mission, Boston, 1878.

THINE are all the gifts, O God!
Thine the broken bread;
Let the naked feet be shod,
And the starving fed.

Let Thy children, by Thy grace,
Give as they abound,
Till the poor have breathing-space,
And the lost are found.

Wiser than the miser's hoards
Is the giver's choice;
Sweeter than the song of birds
Is the thankful voice.

Welcome smiles on faces sad
As the flowers of spring;
Let the tender hearts be glad
With the joy they bring.

Happier for their pity's sake
Make their sports and plays,
And from lips of childhood take
Thy perfected praise!

THE LANDMARKS.

This poem was read at a meeting of citizens of Boston having for its object the preservation of the Old South Church, famous in Colonial and Revolutionary history.

I.

Through the streets of Marblehead
Fast the red-winged terror sped;

Blasting, withering, on it came,
With its hundred tongues of flame,

Where St. Michael's on its way
Stood like chained Andromeda,

Waiting on the rock, like her,
Swift doom or deliverer!

Church that, after sea-moss grew
Over walls no longer new,

Counted generations five,
Four entombed and one alive;

Heard the martial thousand tread
Battleward from Marblehead;

Saw within the rock-walled bay
Treville's lilied pennons play,

And the fisher's dory met
By the barge of Lafayette,

Telling good news in advance
Of the coming fleet of France!

Church to reverend memories dear,
Quaint in desk and chandelier;

Bell, whose century-rusted tongue
Burials tolled and bridals rung;

Loft, whose tiny organ kept
Keys that Snetzler's hand had swept;

Altar, o'er whose tablet old
Sinai's law its thunders rolled!

Suddenly the sharp cry came:
'Look! St. Michael's is aflame!'

Round the low tower wall the fire
Snake-like wound its coil of ire.

Sacred in its gray respect
From the jealousies of sect,

'Save it,' seemed the thought of all,
'Save it, though our roof-trees fall!'

Up the tower the young men sprung;
One, the bravest, outward swung

By the rope, whose kindling strands
Smoked beneath the holder's hands,

Smiting down with strokes of power
Burning fragments from the tower.

Then the gazing crowd beneath
Broke the painful pause of breath;

Brave men cheered from street to street,
With home's ashes at their feet;

Houseless women kerchiefs waved:
'Thank the Lord! St. Michael's saved!'

II.

In the heart of Boston town
Stands the church of old renown,

From whose walls the impulse went
Which set free a continent;

From whose pulpit's oracle
Prophecies of freedom fell;

And whose steeple-rocking din
Rang the nation's birth-day in!

Standing at this very hour
Perilled like St. Michael's tower,

Held not in the clasp of flame,
But by mammon's grasping claim.

Shall it be of Boston said
She is shamed by Marblehead?

City of our pride! as there,
Hast thou none to do and dare?

Life was risked for Michael's shrine;
Shall not wealth be staked for thine?

Woe to thee, when men shall search
Vainly for the Old South Church;

When from Neck to Boston Stone,
All thy pride of place is gone;

When from Bay and railroad car,
Stretched before them wide and far,

Men shall only see a great
Wilderness of brick and slate,

Every holy spot o'erlaid
By the commonplace of trade!

City of our love! to thee
Duty is but destiny.

True to all thy record saith,
Keep with thy traditions faith;

Ere occasion's overpast,
Hold its flowing forelock fast;

Honor still the precedents
Of a grand munificence;

In thy old historic way
Give, as thou didst yesterday

At the South-land's call, or on
Need's demand from fired St. John.

Set thy Church's muffled bell
Free the generous deed to tell.

Let thy loyal hearts rejoice
In the glad, sonorous voice,

Ringing from the brazen mouth
Of the bell of the Old South,—

Ringing clearly, with a will,
'What she was is Boston still!'

1879.

GARDEN.

A hymn for the American Horticultural Society, 1882. [Originally written to be sung at an agricultural and horticultural fair in Amesbury in 1853. It was translated into Portuguese by Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, and read at a harvest festival. It has been translated into Italian also and sung by peasants at the gathering of the vintage.]

O PAINTER of the fruits and flowers,
We own Thy wise design,
Whereby these human hands of ours
May share the work of Thine!

Apart from Thee we plant in vain
The root and sow the seed;
Thy early and Thy later rain,
Thy sun and dew we need.

Our toil is sweet with thankfulness,
Our burden is our boon;
The curse of Earth's gray morning is
The blessing of its noon.

Why search the wide world everywhere
For Eden's unknown ground?
That garden of the primal pair
May nevermore be found.

But, blest by Thee, our patient toil
May right the ancient wrong,
And give to every clime and soil
The beauty lost so long.

Our homestead flowers and fruited trees
May Eden's orchard shame;
We taste the tempting sweets of these
Like Eve, without her blame.

And, North and South and East and West,
The pride of every zone,
The fairest, rarest, and the best
May all be made our own.

Its earliest shrines the young world sought
In hill-groves and in bowers,
The fittest offerings thither brought
Were Thy own fruits and flowers.

And still with reverent hands we cull
Thy gifts each year renewed;
The good is always beautiful,
The beautiful is good.

A GREETING.

Read at Harriet Beecher Stowe's seventieth anniversary, June 14, 1882, at a garden party at ex-Governor Claflin's in Newtonville, Mass.

THRICE welcome from the Land of Flowers
And golden-fruited orange bowers
To this sweet, green-turfed June of ours!
To her who, in our evil time,
Dragged into light the nation's crime
With strength beyond the strength of men,
And, mightier than their swords, her pen!
To her who world-wide entrance gave
To the log-cabin of the slave;
Made all his wrongs and sorrows known,
And all earth's languages his own,—
North, South, and East and West, made all
The common air electrical,
Until the o'ercharged bolts of heaven
Blazed down, and every chain was riven!

Welcome from each and all to her
Whose Wooing of the Minister
Revealed the warm heart of the man
Beneath the creed-bound Puritan,
And taught the kinship of the love
Of man below and God above;
To her whose vigorous pencil-strokes
Sketched into life her Oldtown Folks;
Whose fireside stories, grave or gay,
In quaint Sam Lawson's vagrant way,
With old New England's flavor rife,
Waifs from her rude idyllic life,
Are racy as the legends old
By Chaucer or Boccaccio told;
To her who keeps, through change of place
And time, her native strength and grace,
Alike where warm Sorrento smiles,
Or where, by birchen-shaded isles,
Whose summer winds have shivered o'er
The icy drift of Labrador,
She lifts to light the priceless Pearl
Of Harpswell's angel-beckoned girl!
To her at threescore years and ten
Be tributes of the tongue and pen;
Be honor, praise, and heart-thanks given,
The loves of earth, the hopes of heaven!

Ah, dearer than the praise that stirs
The air to-day, our love is hers!
She needs no guaranty of fame
Whose own is linked with Freedom's name.
Long ages after ours shall keep
Her memory living while we sleep;
The waves that wash our gray coast lines,
The winds that rock the Southern pines,
Shall sing of her; the unending years
Shall tell her tale in unborn ears.
And when, with sins and follies past,
Are numbered color-hate and caste,
White, black, and red shall own as one
The noblest work by woman done.

GODSPEED.

Written on the occasion of a voyage made by my friends Annie Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett.

OUTBOUND, your bark awaits you. Were I one
Whose prayer availeth much, my wish should be
Your favoring trade-wind and consenting sea.
By sail or steed was never love outrun,
And, here or there, love follows her in whom
All graces and sweet charities unite,
The old Greek beauty set in holier light;
And her for whom New England's byways bloom,
Who walks among us welcome as the Spring,

Calling up blossoms where her light feet stray.
God keep you both, make beautiful your way,
Comfort, console, and bless; and safely bring,
Ere yet I make upon a vaster sea
The unreturning voyage, my friends to me.

1882.

WINTER ROSES.

In reply to a flower gift from Mrs. Putnam's school at Jamaica Plain.

My garden roses long ago
Have perished from the leaf-strewn walks;
Their pale, fair sisters smile no more
Upon the sweet-brier stalks.

Gone with the flower-time of my life,
Spring's violets, summer's blooming pride,
And Nature's winter and my own
Stand, flowerless, side by side.

So might I yesterday have sung;
To-day, in bleak December's noon,
Come sweetest fragrance, shapes, and hues,
The rosy wealth of June!

Bless the young hands that culled the gift,
And bless the hearts that prompted it;
If undeserved it comes, at least
It seems not all unfit.

Of old my Quaker ancestors
Had gifts of forty stripes save one;
To-day as many roses crown
The gray head of their son.

And with them, to my fancy's eye,
The fresh-faced givers smiling come,
And nine and thirty happy girls
Make glad a lonely room.

They bring the atmosphere of youth;
The light and warmth of long ago
Are in my heart, and on my cheek
The airs of morning blow.

O buds of girlhood, yet unblown,
And fairer than the gift ye chose,
For you may years like leaves unfold
The heart of Sharon's rose!

1883.

THE REUNION.

Read September 10, 1885, to the surviving students of Haverhill Academy in 1827–1830.

The gulf of seven and fifty years
We stretch our welcoming hands across;
The distance but a pebble's toss
Between us and our youth appears.

For in life's school we linger on
The remnant of a once full list;
Conning our lessons, undismissed,
With faces to the setting sun.

And some have gone the unknown way,
And some await the call to rest;
Who knoweth whether it is best
For those who went or those who stay?

And yet despite of loss and ill,
If faith and love and hope remain,
Our length of days is not in vain,
And life is well worth living still.

Still to a gracious Providence
The thanks of grateful hearts are due,
For blessings when our lives were new,
For all the good vouchsafed us since.

The pain that spared us sorer hurt,
The wish denied, the purpose crossed,
And pleasure's fond occasions lost,
Were mercies to our small desert.

'T is something that we wander back,
Gray pilgrims, to our ancient ways,
And tender memories of old days
Walk with us by the Merrimac;

That even in life's afternoon
A sense of youth comes back again,
As through this cool September rain
The still green woodlands dream of June.

The eyes grown dim to present things
Have keener sight for bygone years,
And sweet and clear, in deafening ears,
The bird that sang at morning sings.

Dear comrades, scattered wide and far,
Send from their homes their kindly word,
And dearer ones, unseen, unheard,
Smile on us from some heavenly star.

For life and death with God are one,
Unchanged by seeming change His care
And love are round us here and there;
He breaks no thread His hand has spun.

Soul touches soul, the muster roll
Of life eternal has no gaps;
And after half a century's lapse
Our school-day ranks are closed and whole.

Hail and farewell! We go our way;
Where shadows end, we trust in light;
The star that ushers in the night
Is herald also of the day!

NORUMBEGA HALL.

Norumbega Hall at Wellesley College, named in honor of Eben Norton Horsford, who was one of the most munificent patrons of that noble institution, and who had just published an essay claiming the discovery of the site of the somewhat mythical city of Norumbega, was opened with appropriate ceremonies, in April, 1886. The following sonnet was written for the occasion, and was read by President Alice E. Freeman, to whom it was addressed.

Not on Penobscot's wooded bank the spires
Of the sought City rose, nor yet beside
The winding Charles, nor where the daily tide
Of Naumkeag's haven rises and retires,
The vision tarried; but somewhere we knew
The beautiful gates must open to our quest,
Somewhere that marvellous City of the West
Would lift its towers and palace domes in view,
And, lo! at last its mystery is made known—
Its only dwellers maidens fair and young,
Its Princess such as England's Laureate sung;
And safe from capture, save by love alone,
It lends its beauty to the lake's green shore,
And Norumbega is a myth no more.

THE BARTHOLDI STATUE.

1886.

The land, that, from the rule of kings,
In freeing us, itself made free,
Our Old World Sister, to us brings
Her sculptured Dream of Liberty:

Unlike the shapes on Egypt's sands
Uplifted by the toil-worn slave,
On Freedom's soil with freemen's hands
We rear the symbol free hands gave.

O France, the beautiful! to thee
Once more a debt of love we owe:
In peace beneath thy Colors Three,
We hail a later Rochambeau!

Rise, stately Symbol! holding forth
Thy light and hope to all who sit
In chains and darkness! Belt the earth
With watch-fires from thy torch uplit!

Reveal the primal mandate still
Which Chaos heard and ceased to be,
Trace on mid-air th' Eternal Will
In signs of fire: 'Let man be free!'

Shine far, shine free, a guiding light
To Reason's ways and Virtue's aim,
A lightning-flash the wretch to smite
Who shields his license with thy name!

ONE OF THE SIGNERS.

Written for the unveiling of the statue of Josiah Bartlett at Amesbury, Mass., July 4, 1888. Governor Bartlett, who was a native of the town, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Amesbury or Ambresbury, so called from the 'anointed stones' of the great Druidical temple near it, was the seat of one of the earliest

religious houses in Britain. The tradition that the guilty wife of King Arthur fled thither for protection forms one of the finest passages in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

O STORIED vale of Merrimac,
Rejoice through all thy shade and shine,
And from his century's sleep call back
A brave and honored son of thine

Unveil his effigy between
The living and the dead to-day;
The fathers of the Old Thirteen
Shall witness bear as spirits may.

Unseen, unheard, his gray compeers,
The shades of Lee and Jefferson,
Wise Franklin reverend with his years,
And Carroll, lord of Carrollton!

Be thine henceforth a pride of place
Beyond thy namesake's over-sea,
Where scarce a stone is left to trace
The Holy House of Amesbury.

A prouder memory lingers round
The birthplace of thy true man here
Than that which haunts the refuge found
By Arthur's mythic Guinevere.

The plain deal table where he sat
And signed a nation's title-deed
Is dearer now to fame than that
Which bore the scroll of Runnymede.

Long as, on Freedom's natal morn,
Shall ring the Independence bells,
Give to thy dwellers yet unborn
The lesson which his image tells.

For in that hour of Destiny,
Which tried the men of bravest stock,
He knew the end alone must be
A free land or a traitor's block.

Among those picked and chosen men
Than his, who here first drew his breath,
No firmer fingers held the pen
Which wrote for liberty or death.

Not for their hearths and homes alone,
But for the world their work was done;
On all the winds their thought has flown
Through all the circuit of the sun.

We trace its flight by broken chains,
By songs of grateful Labor still;
To-day, in all her holy fanes,
It rings the bells of freed Brazil.

O hills that watched his boyhood's home,
O earth and air that nursed him, give,
In this memorial semblance, room
To him who shall its bronze outlive!

And thou, O Land he loved, rejoice
That in the countless years to come,
Whenever Freedom needs a voice,
These sculptured lips shall not be dumb!

The Tent on the Beach

THE TENT ON THE BEACH.

It can scarcely be necessary to name as the two companions whom I reckoned with myself in this poetical picnic, Fields the lettered magnate, and Taylor the free cosmopolite. The long line of sandy beach which defines almost the whole of the New Hampshire sea-coast is especially marked near its southern extremity, by the salt-meadows of Hampton. The Hampton River winds through these meadows, and the reader may, if he choose, imagine my tent pitched near its mouth, where also was the scene of the *Wreck of Rivermouth*. The green bluff to the northward is Great Boar's Head; southward is the Merrimac, with Newburyport lifting its steeples above brown roofs and green trees on its banks. [Mr. Whittier originally designed following the Decameron method and feigning that each person read his own poem, but abandoned it as too hackneyed.]

I WOULD not sin, in this half-playful strain,—
Too light perhaps for serious years, though born
Of the enforced leisure of slow pain,—
Against the pure ideal which has drawn
My feet to follow its far-shining gleam.
A simple plot is mine: legends and runes
Of credulous days, old fancies that have lain
Silent from boyhood taking voice again,
Warmed into life once more, even as the tunes
That, frozen in the fabled hunting-horn,
Thawed into sound:—a winter fireside dream
Of dawns and sunsets by the summer sea,
Whose sands are traversed by a silent throng
Of voyagers from that vaster mystery
Of which it is an emblem;—and the dear
Memory of one who might have tuned my song
To sweeter music by her delicate ear.

When heats as of a tropic clime
Burned all our inland valleys through,
Three friends, the guests of summer time,
Pitched their white tent where sea-winds blew.
Behind them, marshes, seamed and crossed
With narrow creeks, and flower-embossed,
Stretched to the dark oak wood, whose leafy arms
Screened from the stormy East the pleasant inland farms.

At full of tide their bolder shore
Of sun-bleached sand the waters beat;
At ebb, a smooth and glistening floor
They touched with light, receding feet.
Northward a green bluff broke the chain
Of sand-hills; southward stretched a plain
Of salt grass, with a river winding down,
Sail-whitened, and beyond the steeples of the town,

Whence sometimes, when the wind was light
And dull the thunder of the beach,
They heard the bells of morn and night
Swing, miles away, their silver speech.

Above low scarp and turf-grown wall
They saw the fort-flag rise and fall;
And, the first star to signal twilight's hour,
The lamp-fire glimmer down from the tall light-house tower.

They rested there, escaped awhile
From cares that wear the life away,
To eat the lotus of the Nile
And drink the poppies of Cathay,—
To fling their loads of custom down,
Like drift-weed, on the sand-slopes brown,
And in the sea-waves drown the restless pack
Of duties, claims, and needs that barked upon their track.

One, with his beard scarce silvered, bore
A ready credence in his looks,
A lettered magnate, lording o'er
An ever-widening realm of books.
In him brain-currents, near and far,
Converged as in a Leyden jar;
The old, dead authors thronged him round about,
And Elzevir's gray ghosts from leathern graves looked out.

He knew each living pundit well,
Could weigh the gifts of him or her,
And well the market value tell
Of poet and philosopher.
But if he lost, the scenes behind,
Somewhat of reverence vague and blind,
Finding the actors human at the best,
No readier lips than his the good he saw confessed.

His boyhood fancies not outgrown,
He loved himself the singer's art;
Tenderly, gently, by his own
He knew and judged an author's heart.
No Rhadamanthine brow of doom
Bowed the dazed pedant from his room;
And bards, whose name is legion, if denied,
Bore off alike intact their verses and their pride.

Pleasant it was to roam about
The lettered world as he had done,
And see the lords of song without
Their singing robes and garlands on.
With Wordsworth paddle Rydal mere,
Taste rugged Elliott's home-brewed beer,
And with the ears of Rogers, at fourscore,
Hear Garrick's buskined tread and Walpole's wit once more.

And one there was, a dreamer born,
Who, with a mission to fulfil,
Had left the Muses' haunts to turn
The crank of an opinion-mill,
Making his rustic reed of song
A weapon in the war with wrong,
Yoking his fancy to the breaking-plough
That beam-deep turned the soil for truth to spring and grow.

Too quiet seemed the man to ride
The wingèd Hippogriff Reform;
Was his a voice from side to side
To pierce the tumult of the storm?
A silent, shy, peace-loving man,
He seemed no fiery partisan
To hold his way against the public frown,
The ban of Church and State, the fierce mob's hounding down.

For while he wrought with strenuous will
The work his hands had found to do,
He heard the fitful music still
Of winds that out of dream-land blew.
The din about him could not drown
What the strange voices whispered down;
Along his task-field weird processions swept,
The visionary pomp of stately phantoms stepped.

The common air was thick with dreams,—
He told them to the toiling crowd;
Such music as the woods and streams
Sang in his ear he sang aloud;
In still, shut bays, on windy capes,
He heard the call of beckoning shapes,

And, as the gray old shadows prompted him,
To homely moulds of rhyme he shaped their legends grim.

He rested now his weary hands,
And lightly moralized and laughed,
As, tracing on the shifting sands
A burlesque of his paper-craft,
He saw the careless waves o'errun
His words, as time before had done,
Each day's tide-water washing clean away,
Like letters from the sand, the work of yesterday.

And one, whose Arab face was tanned
By tropic sun and boreal frost,
So travelled there was scarce a land
Or people left him to exhaust,
In idling mood had from him hurled
The poor squeezed orange of the world,
And in the tent-shade, as beneath a palm,
Smoked, cross-legged like a Turk, in Oriental calm.

The very waves that washed the sand
Below him, he had seen before
Whitening the Scandinavian strand
And sultry Mauritanian shore.
From ice-rimmed isles, from summer seas
Palm-fringed, they bore him messages;
He heard the plaintive Nubian songs again,
And mule-bells tinkling down the mountain-paths of Spain.

His memory 'round the ransacked earth
On Puck's long girdle slid at ease;
And, instant, to the valley's girth
Of mountains, spice isles of the seas,
Faith flowered in minster stones, Art's guess
At truth and beauty, found access;
Yet loved the while, that free cosmopolite,
Old friends, old ways, and kept his boyhood's dreams in sight.

Untouched as yet by wealth and pride,
That virgin innocence of beach:
No shingly monster, hundred-eyed,
Stared its gray sand-birds out of reach;
Unhoused, save where, at intervals,
The white tents showed their canvas walls,
Where brief sojourners, in the cool, soft air,
Forgot their inland heats, hard toil, and year-long care.

Sometimes along the wheel-deep sand
A one-horse wagon slowly crawled,
Deep laden with a youthful band,
Whose look some homestead old recalled;
Brother perchance, and sisters twain,
And one whose blue eyes told, more plain
Than the free language of her rosy lip,
Of the still dearer claim of love's relationship.

With cheeks of russet-orchard tint,
The light laugh of their native rills,
The perfume of their garden's mint,
The breezy freedom of the hills,
They bore, in unrestrained delight,
The motto of the Garter's knight,
Careless as if from every gazing thing
Hid by their innocence, as Gyges by his ring.

The clanging sea-fowl came and went,
The hunter's gun in the marshes rang;
At nightfall from a neighboring tent
A flute-voiced woman sweetly sang.
Loose-haired, barefooted, hand-in-hand,
Young girls went tripping down the sand;
And youths and maidens, sitting in the moon,
Dreamed o'er the old fond dream from which we wake too soon.

At times their fishing-lines they plied,
With an old Triton at the oar,
Salt as the sea-wind, tough and dried
As a lean cusk from Labrador.
Strange tales he told of wreck and storm,—
Had seen the sea-snake's awful form,

And heard the ghosts on Haley's Isle complain,
Speak him off shore, and beg a passage to old Spain!

And there, on breezy morns, they saw
The fishing-schooners outward run,
Their low-bent sails in tack and flaw
Turned white or dark to shade and sun.
Sometimes, in calms of closing day,
They watched the spectral mirage play,
Saw low, far islands looming tall and nigh,
And ships, with upturned keels, sail like a sea the sky.

Sometimes a cloud, with thunder black,
Stooped low upon the darkening main,
Piercing the waves along its track
With the slant javelins of rain.
And when west-wind and sunshine warm
Chased out to sea its wrecks of storm,
They saw the prismy hues in thin spray showers
Where the green buds of waves burst into white froth flowers.

And when along the line of shore
The mists crept upward chill and damp,
Stretched, careless, on their sandy floor
Beneath the flaring lantern lamp,
They talked of all things old and new,
Read, slept, and dreamed as idlers do;
And in the unquestioned freedom of the tent,
Body and o'er-taxed mind to healthful ease unbent.

Once, when the sunset splendors died,
And, trampling up the sloping sand,
In lines outreaching far and wide,
The white-maned billows swept to land,
Dim seen across the gathering shade,
A vast and ghostly cavalcade,
They sat around their lighted kerosene,
Hearing the deep bass roar their every pause between.

Then, urged thereto, the Editor
Within his full portfolio dipped,
Feigning excuse while searching for
(With secret pride) his manuscript.
His pale face flushed from eye to beard,
With nervous cough his throat he cleared,
And, in a voice so tremulous it betrayed
The anxious fondness of an author's heart,
he read:

1867.

THE WRECK OF RIVERMOUTH.

The Goody Cole who figures in this poem and *The Changeling* was Eunice Cole, who for a quarter of a century or more was feared, persecuted, and hated as the witch of Hampton. She lived alone in a hovel a little distant from the spot where the Hampton Academy now stands, and there she died, unattended. When her death was discovered, she was hastily covered up in the earth near by, and a stake driven through her body, to exorcise the evil spirit. Rev. Stephen Bachiler or Batchelder was one of the ablest of the early New England preachers. His marriage late in life to a woman regarded by his church as disreputable induced him to return to England, where he enjoyed the esteem and favor of Oliver Cromwell during the Protectorate.

RIVERMOUTH Rocks are fair to see,
By dawn or sunset shone across,
When the ebb of the sea has left them free,
To dry their fringes of gold-green moss:
For there the river comes winding down,
From salt sea-meadows and uplands brown,
And waves on the outer rocks afoam
Shout to its waters, 'Welcome home!'

And fair are the sunny isles in view
East of the grisly Head of the Boar,
And Agamenticus lifts its blue
Disk of a cloud the woodlands o'er;
And southerly, when the tide is down,
'Twixt white sea-waves and sand-hills brown,
The beach-birds dance and the gray gulls wheel
Over a floor of burnished steel.

Once, in the old Colonial days,
Two hundred years ago and more,
A boat sailed down through the winding ways
Of Hampton River to that low shore.
Full of a goodly company
Sailing out on the summer sea,
Veering to catch the land-breeze light,
With the Boar to left and the Rocks to right.

In Hampton meadows, where mowers laid
Their scythes to the swaths of salted grass,
'Ah, well-a-day! our hay must be made!'
A young man sighed, who saw them pass.
Loud laughed his fellows to see him stand
Whetting his scythe with a listless hand,
Hearing a voice in a far-off song,
Watching a white hand beckoning long.

'Fie on the witch!' cried a merry girl,
As they rounded the point where Goody Cole
Sat by her door with her wheel atwirl,
A bent and blear-eyed poor old soul.
'Oho!' she muttered, 'ye're brave to-day!
But I hear the little waves laugh and say,
"The broth will be cold that waits at home;
For it's one to go, but another to come!"'

'She's cursed,' said the skipper; 'speak her fair:
I'm scary always to see her shake
Her wicked head, with its wild gray hair,
And nose like a hawk, and eyes like a snake.'
But merrily still, with laugh and shout,
From Hampton River the boat sailed out,
Till the huts and the flakes on Star seemed nigh,
And they lost the scent of the pines of Rye.

They dropped their lines in the lazy tide,
Drawing up haddock and mottled cod;
They saw not the Shadow that walked beside,
They heard not the feet with silence shod.

But thicker and thicker a hot mist grew,
Shot by the lightnings through and through;
And muffled growls, like the growl of a beast,
Ran along the sky from west to east.

Then the skipper looked from the darkening sea
Up to the dimmed and wading sun;
But he spake like a brave man cheerily,
'Yet there is time for our homeward run.'
Veering and tacking, they backward wore;
And just as a breath from the woods ashore
Blew out to whisper of danger past,
The wrath of the storm came down at last!

The skipper hauled at the heavy sail:
'God be our help!' he only cried,
As the roaring gale, like the stroke of a flail,
Smote the boat on its starboard side.
The Shoalsmen looked, but saw alone
Dark films of rain-cloud slantwise blown,
Wild rocks lit up by the lightning's glare,
The strife and torment of sea and air.

Goody Cole looked out from her door:
The Isles of Shoals were drowned and gone,
Scarcely she saw the Head of the Boar
Toss the foam from tusks of stone.
She clasped her hands with a grip of pain,
The tear on her cheek was not of rain:
'They are lost,' she muttered, 'boat and crew!
Lord, forgive me! my words were true!'

Suddenly seaward swept the squall;
The low sun smote through cloudy rack;
The Shoals stood clear in the light, and all
The trend of the coast lay hard and black.

But far and wide as eye could reach,
No life was seen upon wave or beach;
The boat that went out at morning never
Sailed back again into Hampton River.

O mower, lean on thy bended snath,
Look from the meadows green and low:
The wind of the sea is a waft of death,
The waves are singing a song of woe!
By silent river, by moaning sea,
Long and vain shall thy watching be:
Never again shall the sweet voice call,
Never the white hand rise and fall!

O Rivermouth Rocks, how sad a sight
Ye saw in the light of breaking day!
Dead faces looking up cold and white
From sand and seaweed where they lay.
The mad old witch-wife wailed and wept,
And cursed the tide as it backward crept:
'Crawl back, crawl back, blue water-snake!
Leave your dead for the hearts that break!'

Solemn it was in that old day
In Hampton town and its log-built church,
Where side by side the coffins lay
And the mourners stood in aisle and porch.
In the singing-seats young eyes were dim,
The voices faltered that raised the hymn,
And Father Dalton, grave and stern,
Sobbed through his prayer and wept in turn.

But his ancient colleague did not pray;
Under the weight of his fourscore years
He stood apart with the iron-gray
Of his strong brows knitted to hide his tears;
And a fair-faced woman of doubtful fame,
Linking her own with his honored name,
Subtle as sin, at his side withstood
The felt reproach of her neighborhood.

Apart with them, like them forbid,
Old Goody Cole looked drearily round,
As, two by two, with their faces hid,
The mourners walked to the burying-ground.

She let the staff from her clasped hands fall:
'Lord, forgive us! we're sinners all!'
And the voice of the old man answered her:
'Amen!' said Father Bachiler.[48]

So, as I sat upon Appledore
In the calm of a closing summer day,
And the broken lines of Hampton shore
In purple mist of cloudland lay,
The Rivermouth Rocks their story told;
And waves aglow with sunset gold,
Rising and breaking in steady chime,
Beat the rhythm and kept the time.

And the sunset paled, and warmed once more
With a softer, tenderer after-glow;
In the east was moon-rise, with boats off-shore
And sails in the distance drifting slow.
The beacon glimmered from Portsmouth bar,
The White Isle kindled its great red star;
And life and death in my old-time lay
Mingled in peace like the night and day!

'Well!' said the Man of Books, 'your story
Is really not ill told in verse.
As the Celt said of purgatory,
One might go farther and fare worse.'
The Reader smiled; and once again
With steadier voice took up his strain,
While the fair singer from the neighboring tent
Drew near, and at his side a graceful listener bent.

1864.

THE GRAVE BY THE LAKE.

At the mouth of the Melvin River, which empties into Moultonboro Bay in Lake Winnipesaukee, is a great mound. The Ossipee Indians had their home in the neighborhood of the bay, which is plentifully stocked with fish, and many relics of their occupation have been found.

Where the Great Lake's sunny smiles
Dimple round its hundred isles,
And the mountain's granite ledge
Cleaves the water like a wedge,
Ringed about with smooth, gray stones,
Rest the giant's mighty bones.

Close beside, in shade and gleam,
Laughs and ripples Melvin stream;
Melvin water, mountain-born,
All fair flowers its banks adorn;
All the woodland voices meet,
Mingling with its murmurs sweet.

Over lowlands forest-grown,
Over waters island-strown,
Over silver-sanded beach,
Leaf-locked bay and misty reach,
Melvin stream and burial-heap,
Watch and ward the mountains keep.

Who that Titan cromlech fills?
Forest-kaiser, lord o' the hills?
Knight who on the birchen tree
Carved his savage heraldry?
Priest o' the pine-wood temples dim,
Prophet, sage, or wizard grim?

Rugged type of primal man,
Grim utilitarian,
Loving woods for hunt and prowl,
Lake and hill for fish and fowl,
As the brown bear blind and dull
To the grand and beautiful:

Not for him the lesson drawn
From the mountains smit with dawn.
Star-rise, moon-rise, flowers of May,
Sunset's purple bloom of day,—
Took his life no hue from thence,
Poor amid such affluence?

Haply unto hill and tree
All too near akin was he:
Unto him who stands afar
Nature's marvels greatest are;
Who the mountain purple seeks
Must not climb the higher peaks.

Yet who knows, in winter tramp,
Or the midnight of the camp,
What revealings faint and far,
Stealing down from moon and star,
Kindled in that human clod
Thought of destiny and God?

Stateliest forest patriarch,
Grand in robes of skin and bark,
What sepulchral mysteries,
What weird funeral-rites, were his?
What sharp wail, what drear lament,
Back scared wolf and eagle sent?

Now, whate'er he may have been,
Low he lies as other men;
On his mound the partridge drums,
There the noisy blue-jay comes;
Rank nor name nor pomp has he
In the grave's democracy.

Part thy blue lips, Northern lake!
Moss-grown rocks, your silence break!
Tell the tale, thou ancient tree!
Thou, too, slide-worn Ossipee!
Speak, and tell us how and when
Lived and died this king of men!

Wordless moans the ancient pine;
Lake and mountain give no sign;
Vain to trace this ring of stones;
Vain the search of crumbling bones:
Deepest of all mysteries,
And the saddest, silence is.

Nameless, noteless, clay with clay
Mingles slowly day by day;
But somewhere, for good or ill,
That dark soul is living still;
Somewhere yet that atom's force
Moves the light-poised universe.

Strange that on his burial-sod
Harebells bloom, and golden-rod,
While the soul's dark horoscope
Holds no starry sign of hope!
Is the Unseen with sight at odds?
Nature's pity more than God's?

Thus I mused by Melvin's side,
While the summer eventide
Made the woods and inland sea
And the mountains mystery;
And the hush of earth and air
Seemed the pause before a prayer,—

Prayer for him, for all who rest,
Mother Earth, upon thy breast,—
Lapped on Christian turf, or hid
In rock-cave or pyramid:
All who sleep, as all who live,
Well may need the prayer, 'Forgive!'

Desert-smothered caravan,
Knee-deep dust that once was man,
Battle-trenches ghastly piled,
Ocean-floors with white bones tiled,
Crowded tomb and mounded sod,
Dumbly crave that prayer to God.

Oh, the generations old
Over whom no church-bells tolled,
Christless, lifting up blind eyes
To the silence of the skies!
For the innumerable dead
Is my soul disquieted.

Where be now these silent hosts?
Where the camping-ground of ghosts?
Where the spectral conscripts led
To the white tents of the dead?
What strange shore or chartless sea
Holds the awful mystery?

Then the warm sky stooped to make
Double sunset in the lake;
While above I saw with it,
Range on range, the mountains lit;
And the calm and splendor stole
Like an answer to my soul.

Hear'st thou, O of little faith,
What to thee the mountain saith,
What is whispered by the trees?—
'Cast on God thy care for these;
Trust Him, if thy sight be dim:
Doubt for them is doubt of Him.

'Blind must be their close-shut eyes
Where like night the sunshine lies,
Fiery-linked the self-forged chain
Binding ever sin to pain,
Strong their prison-house of will,
But without He waiteth still.

'Not with hatred's undertow
Doth the Love Eternal flow;
Every chain that spirits wear
Crumbles in the breath of prayer;
And the penitent's desire
Opens every gate of fire.

'Still Thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach these souls in prison!
Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of Thy cross!
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that cross could sound!'

Therefore well may Nature keep
Equal faith with all who sleep,
Set her watch of hills around
Christian grave and heathen mound,
And to cairn and kirkyard send
Summer's flowery dividend.

Keep, O pleasant Melvin stream,
Thy sweet laugh in shade and gleam!
On the Indian's grassy tomb
Swing, O flowers, your bells of bloom!
Deep below, as high above,
Sweeps the circle of God's love.

1865.

He paused and questioned with his eye
The hearers' verdict on his song.
A low voice asked: 'Is't well to pry
Into the secrets which belong
Only to God?—The life to be
Is still the unguessed mystery:
Unscaled, unpierced the cloudy walls remain,
We beat with dream and wish the soundless doors in vain.

'But faith beyond our sight may go.'
He said: 'The gracious Fatherhood
Can only know above, below,
Eternal purposes of good.
From our free heritage of will,
The bitter springs of pain and ill
Flow only in all worlds. The perfect day
Of God is shadowless, and love is love alway.'

'I know,' she said, 'the letter kills;
That on our arid fields of strife
And heat of clashing texts distils
The dew of spirit and of life.

But, searching still the written Word,
I fain would find, Thus saith the Lord,
A voucher for the hope I also feel
That sin can give no wound beyond love's power to heal.'

'Pray,' said the Man of Books, 'give o'er
A theme too vast for time and place.
Go on, Sir Poet, ride once more
Your hobby at his old free pace.
But let him keep, with step discreet,
The solid earth beneath his feet.
In the great mystery which around us lies,
The wisest is a fool, the fool Heaven-helped is wise.'

The Traveller said: 'If songs have creeds,
Their choice of them let singers make;
But Art no other sanction needs
Than beauty for its own fair sake.
It grinds not in the mill of use,
Nor asks for leave, nor begs excuse;
It makes the flexile laws it deigns to own,
And gives its atmosphere its color and its tone.

'Confess, old friend, your austere school
Has left your fancy little chance;
You square to reason's rigid rule
The flowing outlines of romance.
With conscience keen from exercise,
And chronic fear of compromise,
You check the free play of your rhymes, to clap
A moral underneath, and spring it like a trap.'

The sweet voice answered: 'Better so
Than bolder flights that know no check;
Better to use the bit, than throw
The reins all loose on fancy's neck.
The liberal range of Art should be
The breadth of Christian liberty,
Restrained alone by challenge and alarm
Where its charmed footsteps tread the border land of harm.

'Beyond the poet's sweet dream lives
The eternal epic of the man.
He wisest is who only gives,
True to himself, the best he can;
Who, drifting in the winds of praise,
The inward monitor obeys;
And, with the boldness that confesses fear,
Takes in the crowded sail, and lets his conscience steer.

'Thanks for the fitting word he speaks,
Nor less for doubtful word unspoken,
For the false model that he breaks,
As for the moulded grace unbroken;
For what is missed and what remains,
For losses which are truest gains,
For reverence conscious of the Eternal eye,
And truth too fair to need the garnish of a lie.'

Laughing, the Critic bowed. 'I yield
The point without another word;
Who ever yet a case appealed
Where beauty's judgment had been heard?
And you, my good friend, owe to me
Your warmest thanks for such a plea,
As true withal as sweet. For my offence
Of cavil, let her words be ample recompense.'

Across the sea one lighthouse star,
With crimson ray that came and went,
Revolving on its tower afar,
Looked through the doorway of the tent.
While outward, over sand-slopes wet,
The lamp flashed down its yellow jet
On the long wash of waves, with red and green
Tangles of weltering weed through the white foam-wreaths seen.

'"Sing while we may,—another day
May bring enough of sorrow;"—thus
Our Traveller in his own sweet lay,
His Crimean camp-song, hints to us,'[47]
The lady said. 'So let it be;
Sing us a song,' exclaimed all three.

She smiled: 'I can but marvel at your choice
To hear our poet's words through my poor borrowed voice.'

Her window opens to the bay,
On glistening light or misty gray,
And there at dawn and set of day
In prayer she kneels.
'Dear Lord!' she saith, 'to many a home
From wind and wave the wanderers come;
I only see the tossing foam
Of stranger keels.

'Blown out and in by summer gales,
The stately ships, with crowded sails,
And sailors leaning o'er their rails,
Before me glide;
They come, they go, but nevermore,
Spice-laden from the Indian shore,
I see his swift-winged Isidore
The waves divide.

'O Thou! with whom the night is day
And one the near and far away,
Look out on yon gray waste, and say
Where lingers he.
Alive, perchance, on some lone beach
Or thirsty isle beyond the reach
Of man, he hears the mocking speech
Of wind and sea.

'O dread and cruel deep, reveal
The secret which thy waves conceal,
And, ye wild sea-birds, hither wheel
And tell your tale.
Let winds that tossed his raven hair
A message from my lost one bear,—
Some thought of me, a last fond prayer
Or dying wail!

'Come, with your dreariest truth shut out
The fears that haunt me round about;
O God! I cannot bear this doubt
That stifles breath.
The worst is better than the dread;
Give me but leave to mourn my dead
Asleep in trust and hope, instead
Of life in death!'

It might have been the evening breeze
That whispered in the garden trees,
It might have been the sound of seas
That rose and fell;
But, with her heart, if not her ear,
The old loved voice she seemed to hear:
'I wait to meet thee: be of cheer,
For all is well!'

1865.

The sweet voice into silence went,
A silence which was almost pain
As through it rolled the long lament,
The cadence of the mournful main.
Glancing his written pages o'er,
The Reader tried his part once more;
Leaving the land of hackmatack and pine
For Tuscan valleys glad with olive and with vine.

THE BROTHER OF MERCY.

[Suggested by reading C. E. Norton's account.]

Piero Luca, known of all the town
As the gray porter by the Pitti wall
Where the noon shadows of the gardens fall,
Sick and in dolor, waited to lay down
His last sad burden, and beside his mat
The barefoot monk of La Certosa sat.

Unseen, in square and blossoming garden drifted,
Soft sunset lights through green Val d'Arno sifted;
Unheard, below the living shuttles shifted
Backward and forth, and wove, in love or strife,
In mirth or pain, the mottled web of life:
But when at last came upward from the street
Tinkle of bell and tread of measured feet,
The sick man started, strove to rise in vain,
Sinking back heavily with a moan of pain.
And the monk said, "'Tis but the Brotherhood
Of Mercy going on some errand good:
Their black masks by the palace-wall I see.'

Piero answered faintly, 'Woe is me!
This day for the first time in forty years
In vain the bell hath sounded in my ears,
Calling me with my brethren of the mask,
Beggar and prince alike, to some new task
Of love or pity,—haply from the street
To bear a wretch plague-stricken, or, with feet
Hushed to the quickened ear and feverish brain,
To tread the crowded lazaretto's floors,
Down the long twilight of the corridors,
Midst tossing arms and faces full of pain.
I loved the work: it was its own reward.
I never counted on it to offset
My sins, which are many, or make less my debt
To the free grace and mercy of our Lord;
But somehow, father, it has come to be
In these long years so much a part of me,
I should not know myself, if lacking it,
But with the work the worker too would die,
And in my place some other self would sit
Joyful or sad,—what matters, if not I?
And now all's over. Woe is me!'—'My son,'
The monk said soothingly, 'thy work is done;
And no more as a servant, but the guest
Of God thou enterest thy eternal rest.
No toil, no tears, no sorrow for the lost,
Shall mar thy perfect bliss. Thou shalt sit down
Clad in white robes, and wear a golden crown
Forever and forever.'—Piero tossed
On his sick-pillow: 'Miserable me!
I am too poor for such grand company;
The crown would be too heavy for this gray
Old head; and God forgive me if I say
It would be hard to sit there night and day,
Like an image in the Tribune, doing naught
With these hard hands, that all my life have wrought,
Not for bread only, but for pity's sake.
I'm dull at prayers: I could not keep awake,
Counting my beads. Mine's but a crazy head,
Scarce worth the saving, if all else be dead.
And if one goes to heaven without a heart,
God knows he leaves behind his better part.
I love my fellow-men: the worst I know
I would do good to. Will death change me so
That I shall sit among the lazy saints,
Turning a deaf ear to the sore complaints
Of souls that suffer? Why, I never yet
Left a poor dog in the *strada* hard beset,
Or ass o'erladen! Must I rate man less
Than dog or ass, in holy selfishness?
Methinks (Lord, pardon, if the thought be sin!)
The world of pain were better, if therein
One's heart might still be human, and desires
Of natural pity drop upon its fires
Some cooling tears.'
Thereat the pale monk crossed
His brow, and muttering, 'Madman! thou art lost!'
Took up his pyx and fled; and, left alone,
The sick man closed his eyes with a great groan
That sank into a prayer, 'Thy will be done!'

Then was he made aware, by soul or ear,
Of somewhat pure and holy bending o'er him,
And of a voice like that of her who bore him,
Tender and most compassionate: 'Never fear!
For heaven is love, as God Himself is love;
Thy work below shall be thy work above.'
And when he looked, lo! in the stern monk's place
He saw the shining of an angel's face!

1864.

The Traveller broke the pause. 'I've seen
The Brothers down the long street steal,

Black, silent, masked, the crowd between,
And felt to doff my hat and kneel
With heart, if not with knee, in prayer,
For blessings on their pious care.'
The Reader wiped his glasses: 'Friends of mine,
We'll try our home-brewed next, instead of foreign wine.'

THE CHANGELING.

For the fairest maid in Hampton
They needed not to search,
Who saw young Anna Favot
Come walking into church,—

Or bringing from the meadows,
At set of harvest-day,
The frolic of the blackbirds,
The sweetness of the hay.

Now the weariest of all mothers,
The saddest two years' bride,
She scowls in the face of her husband,
And spurns her child aside.

'Rake out the red coals, goodman,—
For there the child shall lie,
Till the black witch comes to fetch her
And both up chimney fly.

'It's never my own little daughter,
It's never my own,' she said;
'The witches have stolen my Anna,
And left me an imp instead.

'Oh, fair and sweet was my baby,
Blue eyes, and hair of gold;
But this is ugly and wrinkled,
Cross, and cunning, and old.

'I hate the touch of her fingers,
I hate the feel of her skin;
It's not the milk from my bosom,
But my blood, that she sucks in.

'My face grows sharp with the torment;
Look! my arms are skin and bone!
Rake open the red coals, goodman,
And the witch shall have her own.

'She'll come when she hears it crying,
In the shape of an owl or bat,
And she'll bring us our darling Anna
In place of her screeching brat.'

Then the goodman, Ezra Dalton,
Laid his hand upon her head:
'Thy sorrow is great, O woman!
I sorrow with thee,' he said.

'The paths to trouble are many,
And never but one sure way
Leads out to the light beyond it:
My poor wife, let us pray.'

Then he said to the great All-Father,
'Thy daughter is weak and blind;
Let her sight come back, and clothe her
Once more in her right mind.

'Lead her out of this evil shadow,
Out of these fancies wild;
Let the holy love of the mother
Turn again to her child.

'Make her lips like the lips of Mary
Kissing her blessed Son;
Let her hands, like the hands of Jesus,
Rest on her little one.

'Comfort the soul of thy handmaid,
Open her prison-door,
And Thine shall be all the glory
And praise forevermore.'

Then into the face of its mother
The baby looked up and smiled;
And the cloud of her soul was lifted,
And she knew her little child.

A beam of the slant west sunshine
Made the wan face almost fair,
Lit the blue eyes' patient wonder,
And the rings of pale gold hair.

She kissed it on lip and forehead,
She kissed it on cheek and chin,
And she bared her snow-white bosom
To the lips so pale and thin.

Oh, fair on her bridal morning
Was the maid who blushed and smiled,
But fairer to Ezra Dalton
Looked the mother of his child.

With more than a lover's fondness
He stooped to her worn young face,
And the nursing child and the mother
He folded in one embrace.

'Blessed be God!' he murmured.
'Blessed be God!' she said;
'For I see, who once was blinded,—
I live, who once was dead.

'Now mount and ride, my goodman,
As thou lovest thy own soul!
Woe's me, if my wicked fancies
Be the death of Goody Cole!'

His horse he saddled and bridled,
And into the night rode he,
Now through the great black woodland,
Now by the white-beached sea.

He rode through the silent clearings,
He came to the ferry wide,
And thrice he called to the boatman
Asleep on the other side.

He set his horse to the river,
He swam to Newbury town,
And he called up Justice Sewall
In his nightcap and his gown.

And the grave and worshipful justice
(Upon whose soul be peace!)
Set his name to the jailer's warrant
For Goodwife Cole's release.

Then through the night the hoof-beats
Went sounding like a flail;
And Goody Cole at cockcrow
Came forth from Ipswich jail.

1865.

'Here is a rhyme: I hardly dare
To venture on its theme worn out;
What seems so sweet by Doon and Ayr
Sounds simply silly hereabout;
And pipes by lips Arcadian blown
Are only tin horns at our own.
Yet still the muse of pastoral walks with us,
While Hosea Biglow sings, our new Theocritus.'

THE MAIDS OF ATTITASH.

Attitash, an Indian word signifying 'huckleberry,' is the name of a large and beautiful lake in the northern part of Amesbury. [In a letter to Mr. Fields, Whittier wrote: 'I should like to show thee Attitash, as it is as pretty as St. Mary's Lake which Wordsworth sings, in fact a great deal prettier. The glimpse of the Pawtuckaway range of mountains in Nottingham seen across it is very fine, and it has noble groves of pines and maples and ash trees.']

In sky and wave the white clouds swam,
And the blue hills of Nottingham
Through gaps of leafy green
Across the lake were seen,

When, in the shadow of the ash
That dreams its dream in Attitash,
In the warm summer weather,
Two maidens sat together.

They sat and watched in idle mood
The gleam and shade of lake and wood;
The beach the keen light smote,
The white sail of a boat;

Swan flocks of lilies shoreward lying,
In sweetness, not in music, dying;
Hardhack, and virgin's-bower,
And white-spiked clethra-flower.

With careless ears they heard the plash
And breezy wash of Attitash,
The wood-bird's plaintive cry,
The locust's sharp reply.

And teased the while, with playful hand,
The shaggy dog of Newfoundland,
Whose uncouth frolic spilled
Their baskets berry-filled.

Then one, the beauty of whose eyes
Was evermore a great surprise,
Tossed back her queenly head,
And, lightly laughing, said:

'No bridegroom's hand be mine to hold
That is not lined with yellow gold;
I tread no cottage-floor;
I own no lover poor.

'My love must come on silken wings,
With bridal lights of diamond rings,
Not foul with kitchen smirch,
With tallow-dip for torch.'

The other, on whose modest head
Was lesser dower of beauty shed,
With look for home-hearths meet,
And voice exceeding sweet,

Answered, 'We will not rivals be;
Take thou the gold, leave love to me;
Mine be the cottage small,
And thine the rich man's hall.

'I know, indeed, that wealth is good;
But lowly roof and simple food,
With love that hath no doubt,
Are more than gold without.'

Hard by a farmer hale and young
His cradle in the rye-field swung,
Tracking the yellow plain
With windrows of ripe grain.

And still, whene'er he paused to whet
His scythe, the sidelong glance he met
Of large dark eyes, where strove
False pride and secret love.

Be strong, young mower of the grain;
That love shall overmatch disdain,
Its instincts soon or late
The heart shall vindicate.

In blouse of gray, with fishing-rod,
Half screened by leaves, a stranger trod
The margin of the pond,
Watching the group beyond.

The supreme hours unnoted come;
Unfelt the turning tides of doom;
And so the maids laughed on,
Nor dreamed what Fate had done,—

Nor knew the step was Destiny's
That rustled in the birchen trees,
As, with their lives forecast,
Fisher and mower passed.

Erelong by lake and rivulet side
The summer roses paled and died,
And Autumn's fingers shed
The maple's leaves of red.

Through the long gold-hazed afternoon,
Alone, but for the diving loon,
The partridge in the brake,
The black duck on the lake,

Beneath the shadow of the ash
Sat man and maid by Attitash;
And earth and air made room
For human hearts to bloom.

Soft spread the carpets of the sod,
And scarlet-oak and golden-rod
With blushes and with smiles
Lit up the forest aisles.

The mellow light the lake aslant,
The pebbled margin's ripple-chant
Attempered and low-toned,
The tender mystery owned.

And through the dream the lovers dreamed
Sweet sounds stole in and soft lights streamed;
The sunshine seemed to bless,
The air was a caress.'

Not she who lightly laughed is there,
With scornful toss of midnight hair,
Her dark, disdainful eyes,
And proud lip worldly-wise.

Her haughty vow is still unsaid,
But all she dreamed and coveted
Wears, half to her surprise,
The youthful farmer's guise!

With more than all her old-time pride
She walks the rye-field at his side,
Careless of cot or hall,
Since love transfigures all.

Rich beyond dreams, the vantage-ground
Of life is gained; her hands have found
The talisman of old
That changes all to gold.

While she who could for love dispense
With all its glittering accidents,
And trust her heart alone,
Finds love and gold her own.

What wealth can buy or art can build
Awaits her; but her cup is filled
Even now unto the brim;
Her world is love and him!
1866.

The while he heard, the Book-man drew
A length of make-believing face,
With smothered mischief laughing through:
'Why, you shall sit in Ramsay's place,
And, with his Gentle Shepherd, keep
On Yankee hills immortal sheep,
While love-lorn swains and maids the seas beyond
Hold dreamy tryst around your huckleberry-pond.'

The Traveller laughed: 'Sir Galahad
Singing of love the Trouvere's lay! 130
How should he know the blindfold lad
From one of Vulcan's forge-boys?'—
'Nay,
He better sees who stands outside
Than they who in procession ride,'
The Reader answered: 'selectmen and squire
Miss, while they make, the show that wayside folks admire.

'Here is a wild tale of the North,
Our travelled friend will own as one
Fit for a Norland Christmas hearth
And lips of Christian Andersen.
They tell it in the valleys green
Of the fair island he has seen,
Low lying off the pleasant Swedish shore,
Washed by the Baltic Sea, and watched by Elsinore.'

KALLUNDBORG CHURCH.

'Tie stille, barn min!
Imorgen kommer Fin,
Fa'er din,
Og gi'er dig Esbern Snares öine og hjerte at lege med!'

Zealand Rhyme.

'BUILD at Kallundborg by the sea
A church as stately as church may be,
And there shalt thou wed my daughter fair,'
Said the Lord of Nesvek to Esbern Snare.

And the Baron laughed. But Esbern said,
'Though I lose my soul, I will Helva wed!'
And off he strode, in his pride of will,
To the Troll who dwelt in Ulshoi hill.

'Build, O Troll, a church for me
At Kallundborg by the mighty sea;
Build it stately, and build it fair,
Build it quickly,' said Esbern Snare.

But the sly Dwarf said, 'No work is wrought
By Trolls of the Hills, O man, for naught.
What wilt thou give for thy church so fair?'
'Set thy own price,' quoth Esbern Snare.

'When Kallundborg church is builded well,
Thou must the name of its builder tell,
Or thy heart and thy eyes must be my boon.'
'Build,' said Esbern, 'and build it soon.'

By night and by day the Troll wrought on;
He hewed the timbers, he piled the stone;
But day by day, as the walls rose fair,
Darker and sadder grew Esbern Snare.

He listened by night, he watched by day,
He sought and thought, but he dared not pray;
In vain he called on the Elle-maids shy,
And the Neck and the Nis gave no reply.

Of his evil bargain far and wide
A rumor ran through the country-side;
And Helva of Nesvek, young and fair,
Prayed for the soul of Esbern Snare.

And now the church was wellnigh done;
One pillar it lacked, and one alone;
And the grim Troll muttered, 'Fool thou art!
To-morrow gives me thy eyes and heart!'

By Kallundborg in black despair,
Through wood and meadow, walked Esbern Snare,
Till, worn and weary, the strong man sank
Under the birches on Ulshoi bank.

At his last day's work he heard the Troll
Hammer and delve in the quarry's hole;
Before him the church stood large and fair:
'I have builded my tomb,' said Esbern Snare.

And he closed his eyes the sight to hide,
When he heard a light step at his side:
'O Esbern Snare!' a sweet voice said,
'Would I might die now in thy stead!'

With a grasp by love and by fear made strong,
He held her fast, and he held her long;
With the beating heart of a bird afeard,
She hid her face in his flame-red beard.

'O love!' he cried, 'let me look to-day
In thine eyes ere mine are plucked away;
Let me hold thee close, let me feel thy heart
Ere mine by the Troll is torn apart!

'I sinned, O Helva, for love of thee!
Pray that the Lord Christ pardon me!'
But fast as she prayed, and faster still,
Hammered the Troll in Ulshoi hill.

He knew, as he wrought, that a loving heart
Was somehow baffling his evil art;
For more than spell of Elf or Troll
Is a maiden's prayer for her lover's soul.

And Esbern listened, and caught the sound
Of a Troll-wife singing underground:
'To-morrow comes Fine, father thine:
Lie still and hush thee, baby mine!

'Lie still, my darling! next sunrise
Thou 'lt play with Esbern Snare's heart and eyes!'
'Ho! ho!' quoth Esbern, 'is that your game?
Thanks to the Troll-wife, I know his name!'

The Troll he heard him, and hurried on
To Kallundborg church with the lacking stone.
'Too late, Gaffer Fine!' cried Esbern Snare;
And Troll and pillar vanished in air!

That night the harvesters heard the sound
Of a woman sobbing underground,
And the voice of the Hill-Troll loud with blame
Of the careless singer who told his name.

Of the Troll of the Church they sing the rune
By the Northern Sea in the harvest moon;
And the fishers of Zealand hear him still
Scolding his wife in Ulshoi hill.

And seaward over its groves of birch
Still looks the tower of Kallundborg church,
Where, first at its altar, a wedded pair,
Stood Helva of Nesvek and Esbern Snare!

1865.

'What,' asked the Traveller, 'would our sires,'
The old Norse story-tellers, say
Of sun-graved pictures, ocean wires,
And smoking steamboats of to-day?
And this, O lady, by your leave,
Recalls your song of yester eve:
Pray, let us have that Cable-hymn once more.'
'Hear, hear!' the Book-man cried, 'the lady has the floor.

'These noisy waves below perhaps,
To such a strain will lend their ear,
With softer voice and lighter lapse
Come stealing up the sands to hear,
And what they once refused to do
For old King Knut accord to you.
Nay, even the fishes shall your listeners be,
As once, the legend runs, they heard St. Anthony.'

THE CABLE HYMN.

O LONELY bay of Trinity,
O dreary shores, give ear!
Lean down unto the white-lipped sea
The voice of God to hear!

From world to world His couriers fly,
Thought-winged and shod with fire;
The angel of His stormy sky
Rides down the sunken wire.

What saith the herald of the Lord?
'The world's long strife is done;
Close wedded by that mystic cord,
Its continents are one.

'And one in heart, as one in blood,
Shall all her peoples be;
The hands of human brotherhood
Are clasped beneath the sea.

'Through Orient seas, o'er Afric's plain
And Asian mountains borne,
The vigor of the Northern brain
Shall nerve the world outworn.

'From clime to clime, from shore to shore,
Shall thrill the magic thread;
The new Prometheus steals once more
The fire that wakes the dead.'

Throb on, strong pulse of thunder! beat
From answering beach to beach;
Fuse nations in thy kindly heat,
And melt the chains of each!

Wild terror of the sky above,
Glide tamed and dumb below!
Bear gently, Ocean's carrier-dove,
Thy errands to and fro.

Weave on, swift shuttle of the Lord,
Beneath the deep so far,
The bridal robe of earth's accord,
The funeral shroud of war!

For lo! the fall of Ocean's wall
Space mocked and time outrun;
And round the world the thought of all
Is as the thought of one!

The poles unite, the zones agree,
The tongues of striving cease;
As on the Sea of Galilee
The Christ is whispering, Peace!

1858.

'Glad prophecy! to this at last,'
The Reader said, 'shall all things come.
Forgotten be the bugle's blast,
And battle-music of the drum.
A little while the world may run
Its old mad way, with needle-gun
And ironclad, but truth, at last, shall reign:
The cradle-song of Christ was never sung in vain!'

Shifting his scattered papers, 'Here,'
He said, as died the faint applause,
'Is something that I found last year
Down on the island known as Orr's.
I had it from a fair-haired girl
Who, oddly, bore the name of Pearl,
(As if by some droll freak of circumstance,)
Classic, or wellnigh so, in Harriet Stowe's romance.'

THE DEAD SHIP OF HARPSWELL.

What flecks the outer gray beyond
The sundown's golden trail?
The white flash of a sea-bird's wing,
Or gleam of slanting sail?
Let young eyes watch from Neck and Point,
And sea-worn elders pray,—
The ghost of what was once a ship
Is sailing up the bay!

From gray sea-fog, from icy drift,
From peril and from pain,
The home-bound fisher greets thy lights,
O hundred-harbored Maine!
But many a keel shall seaward turn,
And many a sail outstand,
When, tall and white, the Dead Ship looms
Against the dusk of land.

She rounds the headland's bristling pines;
She threads the isle-set bay;
No spur of breeze can speed her on,
Nor ebb of tide delay.
Old men still walk the Isle of Orr
Who tell her date and name,
Old shipwrights sit in Freeport yards
Who hewed her oaken frame.

What weary doom of baffled quest,
Thou sad sea-ghost, is thine?
What makes thee in the haunts of home
A wonder and a sign?

No foot is on thy silent deck,
Upon thy helm no hand;
No ripple hath the soundless wind
That smites thee from the land!

For never comes the ship to port,
Howe'er the breeze may be;
Just when she nears the waiting shore
She drifts again to sea.
No tack of sail, nor turn of helm,
Nor sheer of veering side;
Stern-fore she drives to sea and night,
Against the wind and tide.

In vain o'er Harpswell Neck the star
Of evening guides her in;
In vain for her the lamps are lit
Within thy tower, Seguin!
In vain the harbor-boat shall hail,
In vain the pilot call;
No hand shall reef her spectral sail,
Or let her anchor fall.

Shake, brown old wives, with dreary joy,
Your gray-head hints of ill;
And, over sick-beds whispering low,
Your prophecies fulfil.
Some home amid yon birchen trees
Shall drape its door with woe;
And slowly where the Dead Ship sails,
The burial boat shall row!

From Wolf Neck and from Flying Point,
From island and from main,
From sheltered cove and tided creek,
Shall glide the funeral train.
The dead-boat with the bearers four,
The mourners at her stern,—
And one shall go the silent way
Who shall no more return!

And men shall sigh, and women weep,
Whose dear ones pale and pine,
And sadly over sunset seas
Await the ghostly sign.
They know not that its sails are filled
By pity's tender breath,
Nor see the Angel at the helm
Who steers the Ship of Death!

1866.

'Chill as a down-east breeze should be,'
The Book-man said. 'A ghostly touch
The legend has. I'm glad to see
Your flying Yankee beat the Dutch.'
'Well, here is something of the sort
Which one midsummer day I caught
In Narragansett Bay, for lack of fish.'
'We wait,' the Traveller said; 'serve hot or cold your dish.'

THE PALATINE.[48]

Block Island in Long Island Sound, called by the Indians Manisees, the isle of the little god, was the scene of a tragic incident a hundred years or more ago, when *The Palatine*, an emigrant ship bound for Philadelphia, driven off its course, came upon the coast at this point. A mutiny on board, followed by an inhuman desertion on the part of the crew, had brought the unhappy passengers to the verge of starvation and madness. Tradition says that wreckers on shore, after rescuing all but one of the survivors, set fire to the vessel, which was driven out to sea before a gale which had sprung up. Every twelvemonth, according to the same tradition, the spectacle of a ship on fire is visible to the inhabitants of the island.

Leagues north, as fly the gull and auk,
Point Judith watches with eye of hawk;
Leagues south, thy beacon flames, Montauk!

Lonely and wind-shorn, wood-forsaken,
With never a tree for Spring to waken,
For tryst of lovers or farewells taken,

Circled by waters that never freeze,
Beaten by billow and swept by breeze,
Lieth the island of Manisees,

Set at the mouth of the Sound to hold
The coast lights up on its turret old,
Yellow with moss and sea-fog mould.

Dreary the land when gust and sleet
At its doors and windows howl and beat,
And Winter laughs at its fires of peat!

But in summer time, when pool and pond,
Held in the laps of valleys fond,
Are blue as the glimpses of sea beyond;

When the hills are sweet with the brier-rose,
And, hid in the warm, soft dells, unclose
Flowers the mainland rarely knows;

When boats to their morning fishing go,
And, held to the wind and slanting low,
Whitening and darkening the small sails show,—

Then is that lonely island fair;
And the pale health-seeker findeth there
The wine of life in its pleasant air.

No greener valleys the sun invite,
On smoother beaches no sea-birds light,
No blue waves shatter to foam more white!

There, circling ever their narrow range,
Quaint tradition and legend strange
Live on unchallenged, and know no change.

Old wives spinning their webs of tow,
Or rocking weirdly to and fro
In and out of the peat's dull glow,

And old men mending their nets of twine,
Talk together of dream and sign,
Talk of the lost ship Palatine,—

The ship that, a hundred years before,
Freighted deep with its goodly store,
In the gales of the equinox went ashore.

The eager islanders one by one
Counted the shots of her signal gun,
And heard the crash when she drove right on!

Into the teeth of death she sped:
(May God forgive the hands that fed
The false lights over the rocky Head!)

O men and brothers! what sights were there!
White upturned faces, hands stretched in prayer!
Where waves had pity, could ye not spare?

Down swooped the wreckers, like birds of prey
Tearing the heart of the ship away,
And the dead had never a word to say.

And then, with ghastly shimmer and shine
Over the rocks and the seething brine,
They burned the wreck of the Palatine.

In their cruel hearts, as they homeward sped,
'The sea and the rocks are dumb,' they said:
'There'll be no reckoning with the dead.'

But the year went round, and when once more
Along their foam-white curves of shore
They heard the line-storm rave and roar,

Behold! again, with shimmer and shine,
Over the rocks and the seething brine,
The flaming wreck of the Palatine!

So, haply in fitter words than these,
Mending their nets on their patient knees,
They tell the legend of Manisees.

Nor looks nor tones a doubt betray;
'It is known to us all,' they quietly say;
'We too have seen it in our day.'

Is there, then, no death for a word once spoken?
Was never a deed but left its token
Written on tables never broken?

Do the elements subtle reflections give?
Do pictures of all the ages live
On Nature's infinite negative,

Which, half in sport, in malice half,
She shows at times, with shudder or laugh,
Phantom and shadow in photograph?

For still, on many a moonless night,
From Kingston Head and from Montauk light
The spectre kindles and burns in sight.

Now low and dim, now clear and higher,
Leaps up the terrible Ghost of Fire,
Then, slowly sinking, the flames expire.

And the wise Sound skippers, though skies be fine,
Reef their sails when they see the sign
Of the blazing wreck of the Palatine! 90
1867.

'A fitter tale to scream than sing,'
The Book-man said. 'Well, fancy, then,'
The Reader answered, 'on the wing
The sea-birds shriek it, not for men,
But in the ear of wave and breeze!' 95
The Traveller mused: 'Your Manisees
Is fairy-land: off Narragansett shore
Who ever saw the isle or heard its name before?

''T is some strange land of Flyaway,
Whose dreamy shore the ship beguiles, 100
St. Brandan's in its sea-mist gray,
Or sunset loom of Fortunate Isles!'
'No ghost, but solid turf and rock
Is the good island known as Block,'
The Reader said. 'For beauty and for ease 105
I chose its Indian name, soft-flowing Manisees!

'But let it pass; here is a bit
Of unrhymed story, with a hint
Of the old preaching mood in it,
The sort of sidelong moral squint 110
Our friend objects to, which has grown,
I fear, a habit of my own.
'T was written when the Asian plague drew near,
And the land held its breath and paled with sudden fear.'

ABRAHAM DAVENPORT.

The famous Dark Day of New England, May 19, 1780, was a physical puzzle for many years to our ancestors, but its occurrence brought something more than philosophical speculation into the minds of those who passed through it. The incident of Colonel Abraham Davenport's sturdy protest is a matter of history.

In the old days (a custom laid aside
With breeches and cocked hats) the people sent
Their wisest men to make the public laws.
And so, from a brown homestead, where the Sound
Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas, 5
Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,
And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil deaths,
Stamford sent up to the councils of the State
Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport. 9

'T was on a May-day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness, like the night
In day of which the Norland sagas tell,—
The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky 16
Was black with ominous clouds, save where its rim
Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which climbs
The crater's sides from the red hell below.
Birds ceased to sing, and all the barnyard fowls 20
Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on leathern wings
Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;
Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew sharp
To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter 25
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
Might look from the rent clouds, not as He looked
A loving guest at Bethany, but stern
As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old State House, dim as ghosts, 30
Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,
Trembling beneath their legislative robes.
'It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,'
Some said; and then, as if with one accord,

All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.
He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice
The intolerable hush. 'This well may be
The Day of Judgment which the world awaits;
But be it so or not, I only know
My present duty, and my Lord's command
To occupy till He come. So at the post
Where He hath set me in His providence,
I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face,—
No faithless servant frightened from my task,
But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;
And therefore, with all reverence, I would say,
Let God do His work, we will see to ours.
Bring in the candles.' And they brought them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,
Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands,
An act to amend an act to regulate
The shad and alewive fisheries. Whereupon
Wisely and well spake Abraham Davenport,
Straight to the question, with no figures of speech
Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without
The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:
His awe-struck colleagues listening all the while,
Between the pauses of his argument,
To hear the thunder of the wrath of God
Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud.

And there he stands in memory to this day,
Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen
Against the background of unnatural dark,
A witness to the ages as they pass,
That simple duty hath no place for fear.

1866.

He ceased: just then the ocean seemed
To lift a half-faced moon in sight;
And, shore-ward, o'er the waters gleamed,
From crest to crest, a line of light,
Such as of old, with solemn awe,
The fishers by Gennesaret saw,
When dry-shod o'er it walked the Son of God,
Tracking the waves with light where'er
His sandals trod.

Silently for a space each eye
Upon that sudden glory turned:
Cool from the land the breeze blew by,
The tent-ropes flapped, the long beach churned
Its waves to foam; on either hand
Stretched, far as sight, the hills of sand;
With bays of marsh, and capes of bush and tree,
The wood's black shore-line loomed beyond the meadowy sea.

The lady rose to leave. 'One song,
Or hymn,' they urged, 'before we part.'
And she, with lips to which belong
Sweet intuitions of all art,
Gave to the winds of night a strain
Which they who heard would hear again;
And to her voice the solemn ocean lent,
Touching its harp of sand, a deep accompaniment.

THE WORSHIP OF NATURE.

The harp at Nature's advent strung
Has never ceased to play;
The song the stars of morning sung
Has never died away.

And prayer is made, and praise is given,
By all things near and far;
The ocean looketh up to heaven,
And mirrors every star.

Its waves are kneeling on the strand,
As kneels the human knee,
Their white locks bowing to the sand,
The priesthood of the sea!

They pour their glittering treasures forth,
Their gifts of pearl they bring,
And all the listening hills of earth
Take up the song they sing.

The green earth sends her incense up
From many a mountain shrine;
From folded leaf and dewy cup
She pours her sacred wine.

The mists above the morning rills
Rise white as wings of prayer;
The altar-curtains of the hills
Are sunset's purple air.

The winds with hymns of praise are loud,
Or low with sobs of pain,—
The thunder-organ of the cloud,
The dropping tears of rain.

With drooping head and branches crossed
The twilight forest grieves,
Or speaks with tongues of Pentecost
From all its sunlit leaves.

The blue sky is the temple's arch,
Its transept earth and air,
The music of its starry march
The chorus of a prayer.

So Nature keeps the reverent frame
With which her years began,
And all her signs and voices shame
The prayerless heart of man.

1867.

The singer ceased. The moon's white rays
Fell on the rapt, still face of her.
'*Allah il Allah!* He hath praise
From all things,' said the Traveller.
'Oft from the desert's silent nights,
And mountain hymns of sunset lights,
My heart has felt rebuke, as in his tent
The Moslem's prayer has shamed my Christian knee unbent.'

He paused, and lo! far, faint, and slow
The bells in Newbury's steeples tolled
The twelve dead hours; the lamp burned low;
The singer sought her canvas fold.
One sadly said, 'At break of day
We strike our tent and go our way.'
But one made answer cheerily, 'Never fear,
We'll pitch this tent of ours in type another year.'

Anti-Slavery Poems

TO WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

[Read at the Convention which formed the American Anti-Slavery Society, in Philadelphia, December, 1833.]

CHAMPION of those who groan beneath
  Oppression's iron hand:
In view of penury, hate, and death,
  I see thee fearless stand.
Still bearing up thy lofty brow,
  In the steadfast strength of truth,
In manhood sealing well the vow
  And promise of thy youth.

Go on, for thou hast chosen well;
  On in the strength of God!
Long as one human heart shall swell
  Beneath the tyrant's rod.
Speak in a slumbering nation's ear,
  As thou hast ever spoken,
Until the dead in sin shall hear,
  The fetter's link be broken!

I love thee with a brother's love,
  I feel my pulses thrill,
To mark thy spirit soar above
  The cloud of human ill.
My heart hath leaped to answer thine,
  And echo back thy words,
As leaps the warrior's at the shine
  And flash of kindred swords!

They tell me thou art rash and vain,
  A searcher after fame;
That thou art striving but to gain
  A long-enduring name;
That thou hast nerved the Afric's hand
  And steeled the Afric's heart,
To shake aloft his vengeful brand,
  And rend his chain apart.

Have I not known thee well, and read
  Thy mighty purpose long?
And watched the trials which have made
  Thy human spirit strong?
And shall the slanderer's demon breath
  Avail with one like me,
To dim the sunshine of my faith
  And earnest trust in thee?

Go on, the dagger's point may glare
  Amid thy pathway's gloom;
The fate which sternly threatens there
  Is glorious martyrdom!
Then onward with a martyr's zeal;
  And wait thy sure reward
When man to man no more shall kneel,
  And God alone be Lord!

1832.

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

Toussaint L'Ouverture, the black chieftain of Hayti, was a slave on the plantation 'de Libertas,' belonging to M. Bayou. When the rising of the negroes took place, in 1791, Toussaint refused to join them until he had aided M. Bayou and his family to escape to Baltimore. The white man had discovered in Toussaint many noble qualities, and had instructed him in some of the first branches of education; and the preservation of his life was owing to the negro's gratitude for this kindness.

In 1797, Toussaint L'Ouverture was appointed,

by the French government, General-in-Chief of the armies of St. Domingo, and, as such, signed the Convention with General Maitland for the evacuation of the island by the British. From this period until 1801 the island, under the government of Toussaint, was happy, tranquil, and prosperous. The miserable attempt of Napoleon to re-establish slavery in St. Domingo, although it failed of its intended object, proved fatal to the negro chieftain. Treacherously seized by Leclerc, he was hurried on board a vessel by night, and conveyed to France, where he was confined in a cold subterranean dungeon, at Besançon, where, in April, 1803, he died. The treatment of Toussaint finds a parallel only in the murder of the Duke D'Enghien. It was the remark of Godwin, in his Lectures, that the West India Islands, since their first discovery by Columbus, could not boast of a single name which deserves comparison with that of Toussaint L'Ouverture.[19]

'T was night. The tranquil moonlight smile
With which Heaven dreams of Earth, shed down
Its beauty on the Indian isle,—
On broad green field and white-walled town;
And inland waste of rock and wood,
In searching sunshine, wild and rude,
Rose, mellowed through the silver gleam,
Soft as the landscape of a dream.
All motionless and dewy wet,
Tree, vine, and flower in shadow met:
The myrtle with its snowy bloom,
Crossing the nightshade's solemn gloom,—
The white cecropia's silver rind
Relieved by deeper green behind,
The orange with its fruit of gold,
The lithe paullinia's verdant fold,
The passion-flower, with symbol holy,
Twining its tendrils long and lowly,
The rhexias dark, and cassia tall,
And proudly rising over all,
The kingly palm's imperial stem,
Crowned with its leafy diadem,
Star-like, beneath whose sombre shade,
The fiery-winged cucullo played!

How lovely was thine aspect, then,
Fair island of the Western Sea!
Lavish of beauty, even when
Thy brutes were happier than thy men,
For they, at least, were free!

Regardless of thy glorious clime,
Unmindful of thy soil of flowers,
The toiling negro sighed, that Time
No faster sped his hours.
For, by the dewy moonlight still,
He fed the weary-turning mill,
Or bent him in the chill morass,
To pluck the long and tangled grass,
And hear above his scar-worn back
The heavy slave-whip's frequent crack:
While in his heart one evil thought
In solitary madness wrought,
One baleful fire surviving still
The quenching of the immortal mind,
One sterner passion of his kind,
Which even fetters could not kill,
The savage hope, to deal, erelong,
A vengeance bitterer than his wrong!

Hark to that cry! long, loud, and shrill,
From field and forest, rock and hill,
Thrilling and horrible it rang,
Around, beneath, above;
The wild beast from his cavern sprang,
The wild bird from her grove!
Nor fear, nor joy, nor agony
Were mingled in that midnight cry;
But like the lion's growl of wrath,
When falls that hunter in his path
Whose barbëd arrow, deeply set,
Is rankling in his bosom yet,
It told of hate, full, deep, and strong,
Of vengeance kindling out of wrong;
It was as if the crimes of years—
The unrequited toil, the tears,
The shame and hate, which liken well
Earth's garden to the nether hell—
Had found in nature's self a tongue,
On which the gathered horror hung;
As if from cliff, and stream, and glen
Burst on the startled ears of men
That voice which rises unto God,
Solemn and stern,—the cry of blood!
It ceased, and all was still once more,
Save ocean chafing on his shore,
The sighing of the wind between
The broad banana's leaves of green,
Or bough by restless plumage shook,
Or murmuring voice of mountain brook.

Brief was the silence. Once again
Pealed to the skies that frantic yell,

Glowed on the heavens a fiery stain,
And flashes rose and fell;
And painted on the blood-red sky,
Dark, naked arms were tossed on high;
And, round the white man's lordly hall,
Trod, fierce and free, the brute he made;
And those who crept along the wall,
And answered to his lightest call
With more than spaniel dread,
The creatures of his lawless beck,
Were trampling on his very neck!
And on the night-air, wild and clear,
Rose woman's shriek of more than fear;
For bloodied arms were round her thrown,
And dark cheeks pressed against her own!

Then, injured Afric! for the shame
Of thy own daughters, vengeance came
Full on the scornful hearts of those,
Who mocked thee in thy nameless woes,
And to thy hapless children gave
One choice,—pollution or the grave!

Where then was he whose fiery zeal
Had taught the trampled heart to feel,
Until despair itself grew strong,
And vengeance fed its torch from wrong?
Now, when the thunderbolt is speeding;
Now, when oppression's heart is bleeding;
Now, when the latent curse of Time
Is raining down in fire and blood,
That curse which, through long years of crime,
Has gathered, drop by drop, its flood,—
Why strikes he not, the foremost one,
Where murder's sternest deeds are done?

He stood the aged palms beneath,
That shadowed o'er his humble door,
Listening, with half-suspended breath,
To the wild sounds of fear and death,
Toussaint L'Ouverture!
What marvel that his heart beat high!
The blow for freedom had been given,
And blood had answered to the cry
Which Earth sent up to Heaven!
What marvel that a fierce delight
Smiled grimly o'er his brow of night,
As groan and shout and bursting flame
Told where the midnight tempest came,
With blood and fire along its van,
And death behind! he was a Man!

Yes, dark-souled chieftain! if the light
Of mild Religion's heavenly ray
Unveiled not to thy mental sight
The lowlier and the purer way,
In which the Holy Sufferer trod,
Meekly amidst the sons of crime;
That calm reliance upon God
For justice in His own good time;
That gentleness to which belongs
Forgiveness for its many wrongs,
Even as the primal martyr, kneeling
For mercy on the evil-dealing;
Let not the favored white man name
Thy stern appeal, with words of blame.
Has he not, with the light of heaven
Broadly around him, made the same?
Yea, on his thousand war-fields striven,
And gloried in his ghastly shame?
Kneeling amidst his brother's blood,
To offer mockery unto God,
As if the High and Holy One
Could smile on deeds of murder done!
As if a human sacrifice
Were purer in His holy eyes,
Though offered up by Christian hands,
Than the foul rites of Pagan lands!

. . . . . .

Sternly, amidst his household band,
His carbine grasped within his hand,
The white man stood, prepared and still,
Waiting the shock of maddened men,
Unchained, and fierce as tigers, when
The horn winds through their caverned hill.
And one was weeping in his sight,
The sweetest flower of all the isle,
The bride who seemed but yesternight
Love's fair embodied smile.
And, clinging to her trembling knee,
Looked up the form of infancy,
With tearful glance in either face
The secret of its fear to trace.

'Ha! stand or die!' The white man's eye
His steady musket gleamed along,
As a tall Negro hastened nigh,
With fearless step and strong.
'What ho, Toussaint!' A moment more,
His shadow crossed the lighted floor.
'Away!' he shouted; 'fly with me,
The white man's bark is on the sea;

Her sails must catch the seaward wind,
For sudden vengeance sweeps behind.
Our brethren from their graves have spoken,
The yoke is spurned, the chain is broken;
On all the hills our fires are glowing,
Through all the vales red blood is flowing!
No more the mocking White shall rest
His foot upon the Negro's breast;
No more, at morn or eve, shall drip
The warm blood from the driver's whip:
Yet, though Toussaint has vengeance sworn
For all the wrongs his race have borne,
Though for each drop of Negro blood
The white man's veins shall pour a flood;
Not all alone the sense of ill
Around his heart is lingering still,
Nor deeper can the white man feel
The generous warmth of grateful zeal.
Friends of the Negro! fly with me,
The path is open to the sea:
Away, for life!' He spoke, and pressed
The young child to his manly breast,
As, headlong, through the cracking cane,
Down swept the dark insurgent train,
Drunken and grim, with shout and yell
Howled through the dark, like sounds from hell.

Far out, in peace, the white man's sail
Swayed free before the sunrise gale.
Cloud-like that island hung afar,
Along the bright horizon's verge,
O'er which the curse of servile war
Rolled its red torrent, surge on surge;
And he, the Negro champion, where
In the fierce tumult struggled he?
Go trace him by the fiery glare
Of dwellings in the midnight air,
The yells of triumph and despair,
The streams that crimson to the sea!

Sleep calmly in thy dungeon-tomb,
Beneath Besançon's alien sky,
Dark Haytien! for the time shall come,
Yea, even now is nigh,
When, everywhere, thy name shall be
Redeemed from color's infamy;
And men shall learn to speak of thee
As one of earth's great spirits, born
In servitude, and nursed in scorn,
Casting aside the weary weight
And fetters of its low estate,
In that strong majesty of soul
Which knows no color, tongue, or clime,
Which still hath spurned the base control
Of tyrants through all time!
Far other hands than mine may wreathe
The laurel round thy brow of death,
And speak thy praise, as one whose word
A thousand fiery spirits stirred,
Who crushed his foeman as a worm,
Whose step on human hearts fell firm:
Be mine the better task to find
A tribute for thy lofty mind,
Amidst whose gloomy vengeance shone
Some milder virtues all thine own,
Some gleams of feeling pure and warm,
Like sunshine on a sky of storm,
Proofs that the Negro's heart retains
Some nobleness amid its chains,—
That kindness to the wronged is never
Without its excellent reward,
Holy to human-kind and ever
Acceptable to God.

1833.

THE SLAVE-SHIPS.

'That fatal, that perfidious bark,
Built i' the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark.'
MILTON'S *Lycidas*.

'The French ship Le Rodeur, with a crew of twenty-two men, and with one hundred and sixty negro slaves, sailed from Bonny, in Africa, April, 1819. On approaching the line, a terrible malady broke out,—an obstinate disease of the eyes,—contagious, and altogether beyond the resources of medicine. It was aggravated by the scarcity of water among the slaves (only half a wine-glass per day being allowed to an individual), and by the extreme impurity of the air in which they breathed. By the advice of the physician, they were brought upon deck occasionally; but some of the poor wretches, locking themselves in each other's arms, leaped overboard, in the hope, which so universally prevails among them, of being swiftly transported to their own homes in Africa. To check this, the captain ordered

several, who were stopped in the attempt, to be shot, or hanged, before their companions. The disease extended to the crew; and one after another were smitten with it, until only *one* remained unaffected. Yet even this dreadful condition did not preclude calculation: to save the expense of supporting slaves rendered unsalable, and to obtain grounds for a claim against the underwriters, *thirty-six of the negroes, having become blind, were thrown into the sea and drowned!*'—*Speech of M. Benjamin Constant, in the French Chamber of Deputies*, June 17, 1820.

In the midst of their dreadful fears lest the solitary individual whose sight remained unaffected should also be seized with the malady, a sail was discovered. It was the Spanish slaver, Leon. The same disease had been there; and, horrible to tell, all the crew had become blind! Unable to assist each other, the vessels parted. The Spanish ship has never since been heard of. The Rodeur reached Guadaloupe on the 21st of June; the only man who had escaped the disease, and had thus been enabled to steer the slaver into port, caught it in three days after its arrival.—*Bibliothèque Ophthalmologique* for November, 1819.

'ALL ready?' cried the captain;
'Ay, ay!' the seamen said;
'Heave up the worthless lubbers,—
The dying and the dead.'
Up from the slave-ship's prison
Fierce, bearded heads were thrust:
'Now let the sharks look to it,—
Toss up the dead ones first!'

Corpse after corpse came up,—
Death had been busy there;
Where every blow is mercy,
Why should the spoiler spare?
Corpse after corpse they cast
Sullenly from the ship,
Yet bloody with the traces
Of fetter-link and whip.

Gloomily stood the captain,
With his arms upon his breast,
With his cold brow sternly knotted,
And his iron lip compressed.
'Are all the dead dogs over?'
Growled through that matted lip;
'The blind ones are no better,
Let 's lighten the good ship.'

Hark! from the ship's dark bosom,
The very sounds of hell!
The ringing clank of iron,
The maniac's short, sharp yell!
The hoarse, low curse, throat-stifled;
The starving infant's moan,
The horror of a breaking heart
Poured through a mother's groan.

Up from that loathsome prison
The stricken blind ones came:
Below, had all been darkness,
Above, was still the same.
Yet the holy breath of heaven
Was sweetly breathing there,
And the heated brow of fever
Cooled in the soft sea air.

'Overboard with them, shipmates!'
Cutlass and dirk were plied;
Fettered and blind, one after one,
Plunged down the vessel's side.
The sabre smote above,
Beneath, the lean shark lay,
Waiting with wide and bloody jaw
His quick and human prey.

God of the earth! what cries
Rang upward unto Thee?
Voices of agony and blood,
From ship-deck and from sea.
The last dull plunge was heard,
The last wave caught its stain,
And the unsated shark looked up
For human hearts in vain.

. . . . . .

Red glowed the western waters,
The setting sun was there,
Scattering alike on wave and cloud
His fiery mesh of hair.
Amidst a group in blindness,
A solitary eye
Gazed, from the burdened slaver's deck,
Into that burning sky.

'A storm,' spoke out the gazer,
'Is gathering and at hand;
Curse on 't, I 'd give my other eye
For one firm rood of land.'

And then he laughed, but only
His echoed laugh replied,
For the blinded and the suffering
Alone were at his side.

Night settled on the waters,
And on a stormy heaven,
While fiercely on that lone ship's track
The thunder-gust was driven.
'A sail!—thank God, a sail!'
And as the helmsman spoke,
Up through the stormy murmur
A shout of gladness broke.

Down came the stranger vessel,
Unheeding on her way,
So near that on the slaver's deck
Fell off her driven spray.
'Ho! for the love of mercy,
We're perishing and blind!'
A wail of utter agony
Came back upon the wind:

'Help us! for we are stricken
With blindness every one;
Ten days we've floated fearfully,
Unnoting star or sun.
Our ship's the slaver Leon,—
We've but a score on board;
Our slaves are all gone over,—
Help, for the love of God!'

On livid brows of agony
The broad red lightning shone;
But the roar of wind and thunder
Stifled the answering groan;
Wailed from the broken waters
A last despairing cry,
As, kindling in the stormy light,
The stranger ship went by.

. . . . . .

In the sunny Guadaloupe
A dark-hulled vessel lay,
With a crew who noted never
The nightfall or the day.
The blossom of the orange
Was white by every stream,
And tropic leaf, and flower, and bird
Were in the warm sunbeam.

And the sky was bright as ever,
And the moonlight slept as well,
On the palm-trees by the hillside,
And the streamlet of the dell:
And the glances of the Creole
Were still as archly deep,
And her smiles as full as ever
Of passion and of sleep.

But vain were bird and blossom,
The green earth and the sky,
And the smile of human faces,
To the slaver's darkened eye;
At the breaking of the morning,
At the star-lit evening time,
O'er a world of light and beauty
Fell the blackness of his crime.

1834.

EXPOSTULATION.

[Originally termed *Stanzas*, then *Follen*.]

Dr. Charles Follen, a German patriot, who had come to America for the freedom which was denied him in his native land, allied himself with the abolitionists, and at a convention of delegates from all the anti-slavery organizations in New England, held at Boston in May, 1834, was chairman of a committee to prepare an address to the people of New England. Toward the close of the address occurred the passage which suggested these lines:—

'The despotism which our fathers could not bear in their native country is expiring, and the sword of justice in her reformed hands has applied its exterminating edge to slavery. Shall the United States—the free United States, which could not bear the bonds of a king—cradle the bondage which a king is abolishing? Shall a Republic be less free than a Monarchy? Shall we, in the vigor and buoyancy of our manhood, be less energetic in righteousness than a kingdom in its age?'—*Dr. Follen's Address.*

'Genius of America!—Spirit of our free institution!—where art thou? How art thou fallen, O Lucifer! son of the morning,—how art thou fallen from Heaven! Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming! The kings of the earth cry out to thee, Aha! Aha! Art thou become like unto us?'—*Speech of Samuel J. May.*

Our fellow-countrymen in chains!
Slaves, in a land of light and law!
Slaves, crouching on the very plains
Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war!
A groan from Eutaw's haunted wood,
A wail where Camden's martyrs fell,
By every shrine of patriot blood,
From Moultrie's wall and Jasper's well!

By storied hill and hallowed grot,
By mossy wood and marshy glen,
Whence rang of old the rifle-shot,
And hurrying shout of Marion's men!
The groan of breaking hearts is there,
The falling lash, the fetter's clank!
Slaves, slaves are breathing in that air
Which old De Kalb and Sumter drank!

What ho! our countrymen in chains!
The whip on woman's shrinking flesh!
Our soil yet reddening with the stains
Caught from her scourging, warm and fresh!
What! mothers from their children riven!
What! God's own image bought and sold!
Americans to market driven,
And bartered as the brute for gold!

Speak! shall their agony of prayer
Come thrilling to our hearts in vain?
To us whose fathers scorned to bear
The paltry menace of a chain;
To us, whose boast is loud and long
Of holy Liberty and Light;
Say, shall these writhing slaves of Wrong
Plead vainly for their plundered Right?

What! shall we send, with lavish breath,
Our sympathies across the wave,
Where Manhood, on the field of death,
Strikes for his freedom or a grave?
Shall prayers go up, and hymns be sung
For Greece, the Moslem fetter spurning,
And millions hail with pen and tongue
Our light on all her altars burning?

Shall Belgium feel, and gallant France,
By Vendome's pile and Schoenbrun's wall,
And Poland, gasping on her lance,
The impulse of our cheering call?
And shall the slave, beneath our eye,
Clank o'er our fields his hateful chain?
And toss his fettered arms on high,
And groan for Freedom's gift, in vain?

Oh, say, shall Prussia's banner be
A refuge for the stricken slave?
And shall the Russian serf go free
By Baikal's lake and Neva's wave?
And shall the wintry-bosomed Dane
Relax the iron hand of pride,
And bid his bondmen cast the chain
From fettered soul and limb aside?

Shall every flap of England's flag
Proclaim that all around are free,
From farthest Ind to each blue crag
That beetles o'er the Western Sea?
And shall we scoff at Europe's kings,
When Freedom's fire is dim with us,
And round our country's altar clings
The damning shade of Slavery's curse?

Go, let us ask of Constantine
To loose his grasp on Poland's throat;
And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line
To spare the struggling Suliote;
Will not the scorching answer come
From turbaned Turk, and scornful Russ:
'Go, loose your fettered slaves at home,
Then turn, and ask the like of us!'

Just God! and shall we calmly rest,
The Christian's scorn, the heathen's mirth,
Content to live the lingering jest
And by-word of a mocking Earth?
Shall our own glorious land retain
That curse which Europe scorns to bear?
Shall our own brethren drag the chain
Which not even Russia's menials wear?

Up, then, in Freedom's manly part,
From graybeard eld to fiery youth,
And on the nation's naked heart
Scatter the living coals of Truth!

Up! while ye slumber, deeper yet
The shadow of our fame is growing!
Up! while ye pause, our sun may set
In blood around our altars flowing!

Oh! rouse ye, ere the storm comes forth,
The gathered wrath of God and man,
Like that which wasted Egypt's earth,
When hail and fire above it ran.
Hear ye no warnings in the air?
Feel ye no earthquake underneath?
Up, up! why will ye slumber where
The sleeper only wakes in death?

Rise now for Freedom! not in strife
Like that your sterner fathers saw,
The awful waste of human life,
The glory and the guilt of war:
But break the chain, the yoke remove,
And smite to earth Oppression's rod,
With those mild arms of Truth and Love,
Made mighty through the living God!

Down let the shrine of Moloch sink,
And leave no traces where it stood;
Nor longer let its idol drink
His daily cup of human blood;
But rear another altar there,
To Truth and Love and Mercy given,
And Freedom's gift, and Freedom's prayer,
Shall call an answer down from Heaven!

1834.

HYMN.

Written for the meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society, at Chatham Street Chapel, New York, held on the 4th of the seventh month, 1834. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

O Thou, whose presence went before
Our fathers in their weary way,
As with Thy chosen moved of yore
The fire by night, the cloud by day!

When from each temple of the free,
A nation's song ascends to Heaven,
Most Holy Father! unto Thee
May not our humble prayer be given?

Thy children all, though hue and form
Are varied in Thine own good will,
With Thy own holy breathings warm,
And fashioned in Thine image still.

We thank Thee, Father! hill and plain
Around us wave their fruits once more,
And clustered vine, and blossomed grain,
Are bending round each cottage door.

And peace is here; and hope and love
Are round us as a mantle thrown,
And unto Thee, supreme above,
The knee of prayer is bowed alone.

But oh, for those this day can bring,
As unto us, no joyful thrill;
For those who, under Freedom's wing,
Are bound in Slavery's fetters still:

For those to whom Thy written word
Of light and love is never given;
For those whose ears have never heard
The promise and the hope of heaven!

For broken heart, and clouded mind,
Whereon no human mercies fall;
Oh, be Thy gracious love inclined,
Who, as a Father, pitiest all!

And grant, O Father! that the time
Of Earth's deliverance may be near,
When every land and tongue and clime
The message of Thy love shall hear;

When, smitten as with fire from heaven,
The captive's chain shall sink in dust,
And to his fettered soul be given
The glorious freedom of the just!

THE YANKEE GIRL.

She sings by her wheel at that low cottage-door,
Which the long evening shadow is stretching before,
With a music as sweet as the music which seems
Breathed softly and faint in the ear of our dreams!

How brilliant and mirthful the light of her eye,
Like a star glancing out from the blue of the sky!
And lightly and freely her dark tresses play
O'er a brow and a bosom as lovely as they!

Who comes in his pride to that low cottage-door,
The haughty and rich to the humble and poor?
'Tis the great Southern planter, the master who waves
His whip of dominion o'er hundreds of slaves.

'Nay, Ellen, for shame! Let those Yankee fools spin,
Who would pass for our slaves with a change of their skin;
Let them toil as they will at the loom or the wheel,
Too stupid for shame, and too vulgar to feel!

'But thou art too lovely and precious a gem
To be bound to their burdens and sullied by them;
For shame, Ellen, shame, cast thy bondage aside,
And away to the South, as my blessing and pride.

'Oh, come where no winter thy footsteps can wrong,
But where flowers are blossoming all the year long,
Where the shade of the palm-tree is over my home,
And the lemon and orange are white in their bloom!

'Oh, come to my home, where my servants shall all
Depart at thy bidding and come at thy call;
They shall heed thee as mistress with trembling and awe,
And each wish of thy heart shall be felt as a law.'

Oh, could ye have seen her—that pride of our girls—
Arise and cast back the dark wealth of her curls,
With a scorn in her eye which the gazer could feel,
And a glance like the sunshine that flashes on steel!

'Go back, haughty Southron! thy treasures of gold
Are dim with the blood of the hearts thou hast sold;
Thy home may be lovely, but round it I hear
The crack of the whip and the footsteps of fear!

'And the sky of thy South may be brighter than ours,
And greener thy landscapes, and fairer thy flowers;
But dearer the blast round our mountains which raves,
Than the sweet summer zephyr which breathes over slaves!

'Full low at thy bidding thy negroes may kneel,
With the iron of bondage on spirit and heel;
Yet know that the Yankee girl sooner would be
In fetters with them, than in freedom with thee!'

1835.

THE HUNTERS OF MEN.

These lines were written when the orators of the American Colonization Society were demanding that the free blacks should be sent to Africa, and opposing Emancipation unless expatriation followed. See the report of the proceedings of the society at its annual meeting in 1834.

Have ye heard of our hunting, o'er mountain and glen,
Through cane-brake and forest, — the hunting of men?
The lords of our land to this hunting have gone,
As the fox-hunter follows the sound of the horn;
Hark! the cheer and the hallo! the crack of the whip,
And the yell of the hound as he fastens his grip!

All blithe are our hunters, and noble their match,
Though hundreds are caught, there are millions to catch.
So speed to their hunting, o'er mountain and glen,
Through cane-brake and forest, — the hunting of men!

Gay luck to our hunters! how nobly they ride
In the glow of their zeal, and the strength of their pride!
The priest with his cassock flung back on the wind,
Just screening the politic statesman behind;
The saint and the sinner, with cursing and prayer,
The drunk and the sober, ride merrily there.
And woman, kind woman, wife, widow, and maid,
For the good of the hunted, is lending her aid:
Her foot's in the stirrup, her hand on the rein,
How blithely she rides to the hunting of men!

Oh, goodly and grand is our hunting to see,
In this 'land of the brave and this home of the free.'
Priest, warrior, and statesman, from Georgia to Maine,
All mounting the saddle, all grasping the rein;
Right merrily hunting the black man, whose sin
Is the curl of his hair and the hue of his skin!
Woe, now, to the hunted who turns him at bay!
Will our hunters be turned from their purpose and prey?
Will their hearts fail within them? their nerves tremble, when
All roughly they ride to the hunting of men?

Ho! alms for our hunters! all weary and faint,
Wax the curse of the sinner and prayer of the saint.
The horn is wound faintly, the echoes are still,
Over cane-brake and river, and forest and hill.
Haste, alms for our hunters! the hunted once more
Have turned from their flight with their backs to the shore:
What right have they here in the home of the white,
Shadowed o'er by our banner of Freedom and Right?
Ho! alms for the hunters! or never again
Will they ride in their pomp to the hunting of men!

Alms, alms for our hunters! why will ye delay,
When their pride and their glory are melting away?
The parson has turned; for, on charge of his own,
Who goeth a warfare, or hunting, alone?
The politic statesman looks back with a sigh,
There is doubt in his heart, there is fear in his eye.
Oh, haste, lest that doubting and fear shall prevail,
And the head of his steed take the place of the tail.
Oh, haste, ere he leave us! for who will ride then,
For pleasure or gain, to the hunting of men?

1835.

STANZAS FOR THE TIMES.

The 'Times' referred to were those evil times of the pro-slavery meeting in Faneuil Hall, August 21, 1835, in which a demand was made for the suppression of free speech, lest it should endanger the foundation of commercial society.

Is this the land our fathers loved,
The freedom which they toiled to win?

Is this the soil whereon they moved?
Are these the graves they slumber in?
Are we the sons by whom are borne
The mantles which the dead have worn?

And shall we crouch above these graves,
With craven soul and fettered lip?
Yoke in with marked and branded slaves,
And tremble at the driver's whip?
Bend to the earth our pliant knees,
And speak but as our masters please?

Shall outraged Nature cease to feel?
Shall Mercy's tears no longer flow?
Shall ruffian threats of cord and steel,
The dungeon's gloom, the assassin's blow,
Turn back the spirit roused to save
The Truth, our Country, and the Slave?

Of human skulls that shrine was made,
Round which the priests of Mexico
Before their loathsome idol prayed;
Is Freedom's altar fashioned so?
And must we yield to Freedom's God,
As offering meet, the negro's blood?

Shall tongue be mute, when deeds are wrought
Which well might shame extremest hell?
Shall freemen lock the indignant thought?
Shall Pity's bosom cease to swell?
Shall Honor bleed?—shall Truth succumb?
Shall pen, and press, and soul be dumb?

No; by each spot of haunted ground,
Where Freedom weeps her children's fall;
By Plymouth's rock, and Bunker's mound;
By Griswold's stained and shattered wall;
By Warren's ghost, by Langdon's shade;
By all the memories of our dead!

By their enlarging souls, which burst
The bands and fetters round them set;
By the free Pilgrim spirit nursed
Within our inmost bosoms, yet,
By all above, around, below,
Be ours the indignant answer,—No!

No; guided by our country's laws,
For truth, and right, and suffering man,
Be ours to strive in Freedom's cause,
As Christians may, as freemen can!
Still pouring on unwilling ears
That truth oppression only fears.

What! shall we guard our neighbor still,
While woman shrieks beneath his rod,
And while he tramples down at will
The image of a common God?
Shall watch and ward be round him set,
Of Northern nerve and bayonet?

And shall we know and share with him
The danger and the growing shame?
And see our Freedom's light grow dim,
Which should have filled the world with flame?
And, writhing, feel, where'er we turn,
A world's reproach around us burn?

Is 't not enough that this is borne?
And asks our haughty neighbor more?
Must fetters which his slaves have worn
Clank round the Yankee farmer's door?
Must he be told, beside his plough,
What he must speak, and when, and how?

Must he be told his freedom stands
On Slavery's dark foundations strong;
On breaking hearts and fettered hands,
On robbery, and crime, and wrong?
That all his fathers taught is vain,—
That Freedom's emblem is the chain?

Its life, its soul, from slavery drawn!
False, foul, profane! Go, teach as well
Of holy Truth from Falsehood born!
Of Heaven refreshed by airs from Hell!
Of Virtue in the arms of Vice!
Of Demons planting Paradise!

Rail on, then, brethren of the South,
Ye shall not hear the truth the less;
No seal is on the Yankee's mouth,
No fetter on the Yankee's press!
From our Green Mountains to the sea,
One voice shall thunder, We are free!

CLERICAL OPPRESSORS.

In the report of the celebrated pro-slavery meeting in Charleston, S. C., on the 4th of the ninth month, 1835, published in the *Courier* of that city, it is stated: 'The clergy of all denominations attended in a body, lending their sanction to the proceedings, and adding by their presence to the impressive character of the scene!'

JUST God! and these are they
Who minister at Thine altar, God of Right!
Men who their hands with prayer and blessing lay
On Israel's Ark of light!

What! preach, and kidnap men?
Give thanks, and rob Thy own afflicted poor?
Talk of Thy glorious liberty, and then
Bolt hard the captive's door?

What! servants of Thy own
Merciful Son, who came to seek and save
The homeless and the outcast, fettering down
The tasked and plundered slave!

Pilate and Herod, friends!
Chief priests and rulers, as of old, combine!
Just God and holy! is that church, which lends
Strength to the spoiler, Thine?

Paid hypocrites, who turn
Judgment aside, and rob the Holy Book
Of those high words of truth which search and burn
In warning and rebuke;

Feed fat, ye locusts, feed!
And, in your tasselled pulpits, thank the Lord
That, from the toiling bondman's utter need,
Ye pile your own full board.

How long, O Lord! how long
Shall such a priesthood barter truth away,
And in Thy name, for robbery and wrong
At Thy own altars pray?

Is not Thy hand stretched forth
Visibly in the heavens, to awe and smite?
Shall not the living God of all the earth,
And heaven above, do right?

Woe, then, to all who grind
Their brethren of a common Father down!
To all who plunder from the immortal mind
Its bright and glorious crown!

Woe to the priesthood! woe
To those whose hire is with the price of blood;
Perverting, darkening, changing, as they go,
The searching truths of God!

Their glory and their might
Shall perish; and their very names shall be
Vile before all the people, in the light
Of a world's liberty.

Oh, speed the moment on
When Wrong shall cease, and Liberty and Love
And Truth and Right throughout the earth be known
As in their home above.

1836.

A SUMMONS.

Written on the adoption of Pinckney's Resolutions in the House of Representatives, and the passage of Calhoun's 'Bill for excluding Papers written or printed, touching the subject of Slavery, from the U. S. Post-office,' in the Senate of the United States.

Mr. Pinckney's resolutions were in brief that Congress had no authority to interfere in any way with slavery in the States; that it ought not

to interfere with it in the District of Columbia, and that all resolutions to that end should be laid on the table without printing. Mr. Calhoun's bill made it a penal offence for postmasters in any State, District, or Territory 'knowingly to deliver, to any person whatever, any pamphlet, newspaper, handbill, or other printed paper or pictorial representation, touching the subject of slavery, where, by the laws of the said State, District, or Territory, their circulation was prohibited.' [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

MEN of the North-land! where 's the manly spirit
Of the true-hearted and the unshackled gone?
Sons of old freemen, do we but inherit
Their names alone?

Is the old Pilgrim spirit quenched within us,
Stoops the strong manhood of our souls so low,
That Mammon's lure or Party's wile can win us
To silence now?

Now, when our land to ruin's brink is verging,
In God's name, let us speak while there is time!
Now, when the padlocks for our lips are forging,
Silence is crime!

What! shall we henceforth humbly ask as favors
Rights all our own? In madness shall we barter,
For treacherous peace, the freedom Nature gave us,
God and our charter?

Here shall the statesman forge his human fetters,
Here the false jurist human rights deny,
And in the church, their proud and skilled abettors
Make truth a lie?

Torture the pages of the hallowed Bible,
To sanction crime, and robbery, and blood?
And, in Oppression's hateful service, libel
Both man and God?

Shall our New England stand erect no longer,
But stoop in chains upon her downward way,
Thicker to gather on her limbs and stronger
Day after day?

Oh no; methinks from all her wild, green mountains;
From valleys where her slumbering fathers lie;
From her blue rivers and her welling fountains,
And clear, cold sky;

From her rough coast, and isles, which hungry Ocean
Gnaws with his surges; from the fisher's skiff,
With white sail swaying to the billow's motion
Round rock and cliff;

From the free fireside of her unbought farmer;
From her free laborer at his loom and wheel;
From the brown smith-shop, where, beneath the hammer,
Rings the red steel;

From each and all, if God hath not forsaken
Our land, and left us to an evil choice,
Loud as the summer thunderbolt shall waken
A People's voice.

Startling and stern! the Northern winds shall bear it
Over Potomac's to St. Mary's wave;
And buried Freedom shall awake to hear it
Within her grave.

Oh, let that voice go forth! The bondman sighing
By Santee's wave, in Mississippi's cane,
Shall feel the hope, within his bosom dying,
Revive again.

Let it go forth! The millions who are gazing
Sadly upon us from afar shall smile,
And unto God devout thanksgiving raising,
Bless us the while.

Oh for your ancient freedom, pure and holy,
For the deliverance of a groaning earth,
For the wronged captive, bleeding, crushed, and lowly,
Let it go forth!

Sons of the best of fathers! will ye falter
With all they left ye perilled and at stake?
Ho! once again on Freedom's holy altar
The fire awake!

Prayer-strengthened for the trial, come together,
Put on the harness for the moral fight,
And, with the blessing of your Heavenly Father,
Maintain the right!

1836.

TO THE MEMORY OF THOMAS SHIPLEY.

Thomas Shipley of Philadelphia was a lifelong Christian philanthropist, and advocate of emancipation. At his funeral thousands of colored people came to take their last look at their friend and protector. He died September 17, 1836.

Gone to thy Heavenly Father's rest!
The flowers of Eden round thee blowing,
And on thine ear the murmurs blest
Of Siloa's waters softly flowing!
Beneath that Tree of Life which gives
To all the earth its healing leaves
In the white robe of angels clad,
And wandering by that sacred river,
Whose streams of holiness make glad
The city of our God forever!

Gentlest of spirits! not for thee
Our tears are shed, our sighs are given;
Why mourn to know thou art a free
Partaker of the joys of heaven?

Finished thy work, and kept thy faith
In Christian firmness unto death;
And beautiful as sky and earth,
When autumn's sun is downward going,
The blessed memory of thy worth
Around thy place of slumber glowing!

But woe for us! who linger still
With feebler strength and hearts less lowly,
And minds less steadfast to the will
Of Him whose every work is holy.
For not like thine, is crucified
The spirit of our human pride:
And at the bondman's tale of woe,
And for the outcast and forsaken,
Not warm like thine, but cold and slow,
Our weaker sympathies awaken.

Darkly upon our struggling way
The storm of human hate is sweeping;
Hunted and branded, and a prey,
Our watch amidst the darkness keeping,
Oh, for that hidden strength which can
Nerve unto death the inner man!
Oh, for thy spirit, tried and true,
And constant in the hour of trial,
Prepared to suffer, or to do,
In meekness and in self-denial.

Oh, for that spirit, meek and mild,
Derided, spurned, yet uncomplaining;
By man deserted and reviled,
Yet faithful to its trust remaining.
Still prompt and resolute to save
From scourge and chain the hunted slave;
Unwavering in the Truth's defence,
Even where the fires of Hate were burning,
The unquailing eye of innocence
Alone upon the oppressor turning!

O loved of thousands! to thy grave,
Sorrowing of heart, thy brethren bore thee.
The poor man and the rescued slave
Wept as the broken earth closed o'er thee;
And grateful tears, like summer rain,
Quickened its dying grass again!

And there, as to some pilgrim-shrine,
Shall come the outcast and the lowly,
Of gentle deeds and words of thine
Recalling memories sweet and holy!

Oh, for the death the righteous die!
An end, like autumn's day declining,
On human hearts, as on the sky,
With holier, tenderer beauty shining;
As to the parting soul were given
The radiance of an opening heaven!
As if that pure and blessed light,
From off the Eternal altar flowing,
Were bathing, in its upward flight,
The spirit to its worship going!

1836.

THE MORAL WARFARE.

When Freedom, on her natal day,
Within her war-rocked cradle lay,
An iron race around her stood,
Baptized her infant brow in blood;
And, through the storm which round her swept,
Their constant ward and watching kept.

Then, where our quiet herds repose,
The roar of baleful battle rose,
And brethren of a common tongue
To mortal strife as tigers sprung,
And every gift on Freedom's shrine
Was man for beast, and blood for wine!

Our fathers to their graves have gone;
Their strife is past, their triumph won;
But sterner trials wait the race
Which rises in their honored place;
A moral warfare with the crime
And folly of an evil time.

So let it be. In God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight,
And, strong in Him whose cause is ours
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He has given,—
The Light, and Truth, and Love of Heaven.

1836.

RITNER.

Written on reading the Message of Governor Ritner, of Pennsylvania, 1836. The fact redounds to the credit and serves to perpetuate the memory of the independent farmer and high-souled statesman, that he alone of all the Governors of the Union in 1836 met the insulting demands and menaces of the South in a manner becoming a freeman and hater of Slavery, in his message to the Legislature of Pennsylvania. [Originally entitled *Lines*.]

Thank God for the token! one lip is still free,
One spirit untrammelled, unbending one knee!
Like the oak of the mountain, deep-rooted and firm,
Erect, when the multitude bends to the storm;
When traitors to Freedom, and Honor, and God,
Are bowed at an Idol polluted with blood;
When the recreant North has forgotten her trust,
And the lip of her honor is low in the dust,—
Thank God, that one arm from the shackle has broken!
Thank God, that one man as a freeman has spoken!

O'er thy crags, Alleghany, a blast has been blown!
Down thy tide, Susquehanna, the murmur has gone!
To the land of the South, of the charter and chain,
Of Liberty sweetened with Slavery's pain;
Where the cant of Democracy dwells on the lips
Of the forgers of fetters, and wielders of whips!
Where 'chivalric' honor means really no more
Than scourging of women, and robbing the poor!
Where the Moloch of Slavery sitteth on high,
And the words which he utters, are—Worship, or die!

Right onward, oh, speed it! Wherever the blood
Of the wronged and the guiltless is crying to God;
Wherever a slave in his fetters is pining;
Wherever the lash of the driver is twining;
Wherever from kindred, torn rudely apart,
Comes the sorrowful wail of the broken of heart;
Wherever the shackles of tyranny bind,
In silence and darkness, the God-given mind;
There, God speed it onward! its truth will be felt,
The bonds shall be loosened, the iron shall melt!

And oh, will the land where the free soul of Penn
Still lingers and breathes over mountain and glen;
Will the land where a Benezet's spirit went forth
To the peeled and the meted, and outcast of Earth;
Where the words of the Charter of Liberty first
From the soul of the sage and the patriot burst;
Where first for the wronged and the weak of their kind,
The Christian and statesman their efforts combined;
Will that land of the free and the good wear a chain?
Will the call to the rescue of Freedom be vain?

No, Ritner! her 'Friends' at thy warning shall stand
Erect for the truth, like their ancestral band;
Forgetting the feuds and the strife of past time,
Counting coldness injustice, and silence a crime;
Turning back from the cavil of creeds, to unite
Once again for the poor in defence of the Right;
Breasting calmly, but firmly, the full tide of Wrong,
Overwhelmed, but not borne on its surges along;
Unappalled by the danger, the shame, and the pain,
And counting each trial for Truth as their gain!

And that bold-hearted yeomanry, honest and true,
Who, haters of fraud, give to labor its due;
Whose fathers, of old, sang in concert with thine,
On the banks of Swetara, the songs of the Rhine,—
The German-born pilgrims, who first dared to brave
The scorn of the proud in the cause of the slave;
Will the sons of such men yield the lords of the South
One brow for the brand, for the padlock one mouth?
They cater to tyrants? They rivet the chain,
Which their fathers smote off, on the negro again?

No, never! one voice, like the sound in the cloud,
When the roar of the storm waxes loud and more loud,
Wherever the foot of the freeman hath pressed
From the Delaware's marge to the Lake of the West,
On the South-going breezes shall deepen and grow
Till the land it sweeps over shall tremble below!
The voice of a people, uprisen, awake,
Pennsylvania's watchword, with Freedom at stake,
Thrilling up from each valley, flung down from each height,
'Our Country and Liberty! God for the Right!'

1837.

THE PASTORAL LETTER.

The General Association of Congregational ministers in Massachusetts met at Brookfield, June 27, 1837, and issued a Pastoral Letter to the churches under its care. The immediate occasion of it was the profound sensation produced by the recent public lecture in Massachusetts by Angelina and Sarah Grimké, two noble women from South Carolina, who bore their testimony against slavery. The Letter demanded that 'the perplexed and agitating subjects which are now common amongst us . . . should not be forced upon any church as matters for debate, at the hazard of alienation and division,' and called attention to the dangers now seeming 'to threaten the female character with widespread and permanent injury.'

So, this is all,—the utmost reach
Of priestly power the mind to fetter!
When laymen think, when women preach,
A war of words, a 'Pastoral Letter!'
Now, shame upon ye, parish Popes!
Was it thus with those, your predecessors,
Who sealed with racks, and fire, and ropes
Their loving-kindness to transgressors?

A 'Pastoral Letter,' grave and dull;
Alas! in hoof and horns and features,
How different is your Brookfield bull
From him who bellows from St. Peter's!
Your pastoral rights and powers from harm,
Think ye, can words alone preserve them?
Your wiser fathers taught the arm
And sword of temporal power to serve them.

Oh, glorious days, when Church and State
Were wedded by your spiritual fathers!
And on submissive shoulders sat
Your Wilsons and your Cotton Mathers.
No vile 'itinerant' then could mar
The beauty of your tranquil Zion,
But at his peril of the scar
Of hangman's whip and branding-iron.

Then, wholesome laws relieved the Church
Of heretic and mischief-maker,
And priest and bailiff joined in search,
By turns, of Papist, witch, and Quaker!
The stocks were at each church's door,
The gallows stood on Boston Common,
A Papist's ears the pillory bore,—
The gallows-rope, a Quaker woman!

Your fathers dealt not as ye deal
With 'non-professing' frantic teachers;
They bored the tongue with red-hot steel,
And flayed the backs of 'female preachers.'
Old Hampton, had her fields a tongue,
And Salem's streets could tell their story,
Of fainting woman dragged along,
Gashed by the whip accursed and gory!

And will ye ask me, why this taunt
Of memories sacred from the scorner?
And why with reckless hand I plant
A nettle on the graves ye honor?
Not to reproach New England's dead
This record from the past I summon,
Of manhood to the scaffold led,
And suffering and heroic woman.

No, for yourselves alone, I turn
The pages of intolerance over,
That, in their spirit, dark and stern,
Ye haply may your own discover!
For, if ye claim the 'pastoral right'
To silence Freedom's voice of warning,
And from your precincts shut the light
Of Freedom's day around ye dawning;

If when an earthquake voice of power
And signs in earth and heaven are showing
That forth, in its appointed hour,
The Spirit of the Lord is going!
And, with that Spirit, Freedom's light
On kindred, tongue, and people breaking,
Whose slumbering millions, at the sight,
In glory and in strength are waking!

When for the sighing of the poor,
And for the needy, God hath risen,
And chains are breaking, and a door
Is opening for the souls in prison!
If then ye would, with puny hands,
Arrest the very work of Heaven,
And bind anew the evil bands
Which God's right arm of power hath riven;

What marvel that, in many a mind,
Those darker deeds of bigot madness
Are closely with your own combined,
Yet 'less in anger than in sadness'?*
What marvel, if the people learn
To claim the right of free opinion?
What marvel, if at times they spurn
The ancient yoke of your dominion?

A glorious remnant linger yet,
Whose lips are wet at Freedom's fountains,
The coming of whose welcome feet
Is beautiful upon our mountains!
Men, who the gospel tidings bring
Of Liberty and Love forever,
Whose joy is an abiding spring,
Whose peace is as a gentle river!

But ye, who scorn the thrilling tale
Of Carolina's high-souled daughters,
Which echoes here the mournful wail
Of sorrow from Edisto's waters,
Close while ye may the public ear,
With malice vex, with slander wound them,
The pure and good shall throng to hear,
And tried and manly hearts surround them.

Oh, ever may the power which led
Their way to such a fiery trial,
And strengthened womanhood to tread
The wine-press of such self-denial,
Be round them in an evil land,
With wisdom and with strength from Heaven,
With Miriam's voice, and Judith's hand,
And Deborah's song, for triumph given!

And what are ye who strive with God
Against the ark of His salvation,
Moved by the breath of prayer abroad,
With blessings for a dying nation?
What, but the stubble and the hay
To perish, even as flax consuming,
With all that bars His glorious way,
Before the brightness of His coming?

And thou, sad Angel, who so long
Hast waited for the glorious token,
That Earth from all her bonds of wrong
To liberty and light has broken,—
Angel of Freedom! soon to thee
The sounding trumpet shall be given,
And over Earth's full jubilee
Shall deeper joy be felt in Heaven!

1837.

HYMN.

Written for the celebration of the third anniversary of British emancipation, at the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, first of August, 1837. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

O Holy Father! just and true
Are all Thy works and words and ways,
And unto Thee alone are due
Thanksgiving and eternal praise!
As children of Thy gracious care,
We veil the eye, we bend the knee,
With broken words of praise and prayer,
Father and God, we come to Thee.

For Thou hast heard, O God of Right,
The sighing of the island slave;
And stretched for him the arm of might,
Not shortened that it could not save.
The laborer sits beneath his vine,
The shackled soul and hand are free;
Thanksgiving! for the work is Thine!
Praise! for the blessing is of Thee!

And oh, we feel Thy presence here,
Thy awful arm in judgment bare!
Thine eye hath seen the bondman's tear;
Thine ear hath heard the bondman's prayer.

Praise! for the pride of man is low,
The counsels of the wise are naught,
The fountains of repentance flow;
What hath our God in mercy wrought?

Speed on Thy work, Lord God of Hosts!
And when the bondman's chain is riven,
And swells from all our guilty coasts
The anthem of the free to Heaven,
Oh, not to those whom Thou hast led,
As with Thy cloud and fire before,
But unto Thee, in fear and dread,
Be praise and glory evermore.

THE FAREWELL

OF A VIRGINIA SLAVE MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTERS SOLD INTO SOUTHERN BONDAGE.

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,
Where the noisome insect stings,
Where the fever demon strews
Poison with the falling dews,
Where the sickly sunbeams glare
Through the hot and misty air;
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
There no mother's eye is near them,
There no mother's ear can hear them;
Never, when the torturing lash
Seams their back with many a gash,
Shall a mother's kindness bless them,
Or a mother's arms caress them.
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Oh, when weary, sad, and slow,
From the fields at night they go,
Faint with toil, and racked with pain,
To their cheerless homes again,
There no brother's voice shall greet them;
There no father's welcome meet them.
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
From the tree whose shadow lay
On their childhood's place of play;
From the cool spring where they drank;
Rock, and hill, and rivulet bank;
From the solemn house of prayer,
And the holy counsels there;
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone;
Toiling through the weary day,
And at night the spoiler's prey.
Oh, that they had earlier died,
Sleeping calmly, side by side,
Where the tyrant's power is o'er,
And the fetter galls no more!
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
By the holy love He beareth;
By the bruisëd reed He spareth;
Oh, may He, to whom alone
All their cruel wrongs are known,
Still their hope and refuge prove,
With a more than mother's love.
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

1838.

PENNSYLVANIA HALL.

Read at the dedication of Pennsylvania Hall, Philadelphia, May 15, 1838. The building was erected by an association of gentlemen, irrespective of sect or party, 'that the citizens of Philadelphia should possess a room wherein the principles of Liberty, and Equality of Civil Rights, could be freely discussed, and the evils of slavery fearlessly portrayed.' On the evening of the 17th it was burned by a mob, destroying the office of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, of which I was editor, and with it my books and papers.

NOT with the splendors of the days of old,
The spoil of nations, and barbaric gold;
No weapons wrested from the fields of blood,
Where dark and stern the unyielding Roman stood,
And the proud eagles of his cohorts saw
A world, war-wasted, crouching to his law;
Nor blazoned car, nor banners floating gay,
Like those which swept along the Appian Way,
When, to the welcome of imperial Rome,
The victor warrior came in triumph home,
And trumpet peal, and shoutings wild and high,
Stirred the blue quiet of the Italian sky;
But calm and grateful, prayerful and sincere,
As Christian freemen only, gathering here,
We dedicate our fair and lofty Hall,
Pillar and arch, entablature and wall,
As Virtue's shrine, as Liberty's abode,
Sacred to Freedom, and to Freedom's God!
Far statelier Halls, 'neath brighter skies than these,
Stood darkly mirrored in the Ægean seas,
Pillar and shrine, and life-like statues seen,
Graceful and pure, the marble shafts between;
Where glorious Athens from her rocky hill
Saw Art and Beauty subject to her will;
And the chaste temple, and the classic grove,
The hall of sages, and the bowers of love,
Arch, fane, and column, graced the shores, and gave
Their shadows to the blue Saronic wave;
And statelier rose, on Tiber's winding side,
The Pantheon's dome, the Coliseum's pride,
The Capitol, whose arches backward flung
The deep, clear cadence of the Roman tongue,
Whence stern decrees, like words of fate, went forth
To the awed nations of a conquered earth,
Where the proud Cæsars in their glory came,
And Brutus lightened from his lips of flame!
Yet in the porches of Athena's halls,
And in the shadow of her stately walls,
Lurked the sad bondman, and his tears of woe
Wet the cold marble with unheeded flow;
And fetters clanked beneath the silver dome
Of the proud Pantheon of imperious Rome.
Oh, not for him, the chained and stricken slave,
By Tiber's shore, or blue Ægina's wave,
In the thronged forum, or the sages' seat,
The bold lip pleaded, and the warm heart beat;
No soul of sorrow melted at his pain,
No tear of pity rusted on his chain!

But this fair Hall to Truth and Freedom given,
Pledged to the Right before all Earth and Heaven,
A free arena for the strife of mind,
To caste, or sect, or color unconfined,
Shall thrill with echoes such as ne'er of old
From Roman hall or Grecian temple rolled;
Thoughts shall find utterance such as never yet
The Propylea or the Forum met.
Beneath its roof no gladiator's strife
Shall win applauses with the waste of life;

No lordly lictor urge the barbarous game,
No wanton Lais glory in her shame.
But here the tear of sympathy shall flow,
As the ear listens to the tale of woe;
Here in stern judgment of the oppressor's wrong
Shall strong rebukings thrill on Freedom's tongue,
No partial justice hold th' unequal scale,
No pride of caste a brother's rights assail,
No tyrant's mandates echo from this wall,
Holy to Freedom and the Rights of All!
But a fair field, where mind may close with mind,
Free as the sunshine and the chainless wind;
Where the high trust is fixed on Truth alone,
And bonds and fetters from the soul are thrown;
Where wealth, and rank, and worldly pomp, and might,
Yield to the presence of the True and Right.

And fitting is it that this Hall should stand
Where Pennsylvania's Founder led his band,
From thy blue waters, Delaware!—to press
The virgin verdure of the wilderness.
Here, where all Europe with amazement saw
The soul's high freedom trammelled by no law;
Here, where the fierce and warlike forest-men
Gathered, in peace, around the home of Penn,
Awed by the weapons Love alone had given
Drawn from the holy armory of Heaven;
Where Nature's voice against the bond-man's wrong
First found an earnest and indignant tongue;
Where Lay's bold message to the proud was borne;
And Keith's rebuke, and Franklin's manly scorn!

Fitting it is that here, where Freedom first
From her fair feet shook off the Old World's dust,
Spread her white pinions to our Western blast,
And her free tresses to our sunshine cast,
One Hall should rise redeemed from Slavery's ban,
One Temple sacred to the Rights of Man!

Oh! if the spirits of the parted come,
Visiting angels, to their olden home;
If the dead fathers of the land look forth
From their fair dwellings, to the things of earth,
Is it a dream, that with their eyes of love,
They gaze now on us from the bowers above?
Lay's ardent soul, and Benezet the mild,
Steadfast in faith, yet gentle as a child,
Meek-hearted Woolman, and that brother-band,
The sorrowing exiles from their 'Father-land,'
Leaving their homes in Krieshiem's bowers of vine,
And the blue beauty of their glorious Rhine,
To seek amidst our solemn depths of wood
Freedom from man, and holy peace with God;
Who first of all their testimonial gave
Against the oppressor, for the outcast slave,
Is it a dream that such as these look down,
And with their blessing our rejoicings crown?
Let us rejoice, that while the pulpit's door
Is barred against the pleaders for the poor;
While the Church, wrangling upon points of faith,
Forgets her bondmen suffering unto death;
While crafty Traffic and the lust of Gain
Unite to forge Oppression's triple chain,
One door is open, and one Temple free,
As a resting-place for hunted Liberty!
Where men may speak, unshackled and unawed,
High words of Truth, for Freedom and for God.

And when that truth its perfect work hath done,
And rich with blessings o'er our land hath gone;
When not a slave beneath his yoke shall pine,
From broad Potomac to the far Sabine:
When unto angel lips at last is given
The silver trump of Jubilee in Heaven;
And from Virginia's plains, Kentucky's shades,
And through the dim Floridian everglades,
Rises, to meet that angel-trumpet's sound,
The voice of millions from their chains unbound;
Then, though this Hall be crumbling in decay,
Its strong walls blending with the common clay,
Yet round the ruins of its strength shall stand
The best and noblest of a ransomed land—
Pilgrims, like these who throng around the shrine
Of Mecca, or of holy Palestine!
A prouder glory shall that ruin own
Than that which lingers round the Parthenon.
Here shall the child of after years be taught
The works of Freedom which his fathers wrought;
Told of the trials of the present hour,
Our weary strife with prejudice and power;
How the high errand quickened woman's soul,
And touched her lip as with a living coal;
How Freedom's martyrs kept their lofty faith
True and unwavering, unto bonds and death;
The pencil's art shall sketch the ruined Hall,
The Muses' garland crown its aged wall,
And History's pen for after times record
Its consecration unto Freedom's God!

THE NEW YEAR.

Addressed to the Patrons of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*.

The wave is breaking on the shore,
The echo fading from the chime;
Again the shadow moveth o'er
The dial-plate of time!

O seer-seen Angel! waiting now
With weary feet on sea and shore,
Impatient for the last dread vow
That time shall be no more!

Once more across thy sleepless eye
The semblance of a smile has passed:
The year departing leaves more nigh
Time's fearfullest and last.

Oh, in that dying year hath been
The sum of all since time began;
The birth and death, the joy and pain,
Of Nature and of Man.

Spring, with her change of sun and shower,
And streams released from Winter's chain,
And bursting bud, and opening flower,
And greenly growing grain;

And Summer's shade, and sunshine warm,
And rainbows o'er her hill-tops bowed,
And voices in her rising storm;
God speaking from His cloud!

And Autumn's fruits and clustering sheaves,
And soft, warm days of golden light,
The glory of her forest leaves,
And harvest-moon at night;

And Winter with her leafless grove,
And prisoned stream, and drifting snow,
The brilliance of her heaven above
And of her earth below:

And man, in whom an angel's mind
With earth's low instincts finds abode,
The highest of the links which bind
Brute nature to her God;

His infant eye hath seen the light,
His childhood's merriest laughter rung,
And active sports to manlier might
The nerves of boyhood strung!

And quiet love, and passion's fires,
Have soothed or burned in manhood's breast,
And lofty aims and low desires
By turns disturbed his rest.

The wailing of the newly-born
Has mingled with the funeral knell;
And o'er the dying's ear has gone
The merry marriage-bell.

And Wealth has filled his halls with mirth,
While Want, in many a humble shed,
Toiled, shivering by her cheerless hearth,
The live-long night for bread.

And worse than all, the human slave,
The sport of lust, and pride, and scorn!
Plucked off the crown his Maker gave,
His regal manhood gone!

Oh, still, my country! o'er thy plains,
Blackened with slavery's blight and ban,
That human chattel drags his chains,
An uncreated man!

And still, where'er to sun and breeze,
My country, is thy flag unrolled,
With scorn, the gazing stranger sees
A stain on every fold.

Oh, tear the gorgeous emblem down!
It gathers scorn from every eye,
And despots smile and good men frown
Whene'er it passes by.

Shame! shame! its starry splendors glow
Above the slaver's loathsome jail;
Its folds are ruffling even now
His crimson flag of sale.

Still round our country's proudest hall
The trade in human flesh is driven,
And at each careless hammer-fall
A human heart is riven.

And this, too, sanctioned by the men
Vested with power to shield the right,
And throw each vile and robber den
Wide open to the light.

Yet, shame upon them! there they sit,
Men of the North, subdued and still;
Meek, pliant poltroons, only fit
To work a master's will.

Sold, bargained off for Southern votes,
A passive herd of Northern mules,
Just braying through their purchased throats
Whate'er their owner rules.

And he,[50] the basest of the base,
The vilest of the vile, whose name,
Embalmed in infinite disgrace,
Is deathless in its shame!

A tool, to bolt the people's door
Against the people clamoring there,
An ass, to trample on their floor
A people's right of prayer!

Nailed to his self-made gibbet fast,
Self-pilloried to the public view,
A mark for every passing blast
Of scorn to whistle through;

There let him hang, and hear the boast
Of Southrons o'er their pliant tool,—
A new Stylites on his post,
'Sacred to ridicule!'

Look we at home! our noble hall,
To Freedom's holy purpose given,
Now rears its black and ruined wall,
Beneath the wintry heaven,

Telling the story of its doom,
The fiendish mob, the prostrate law,
The fiery jet through midnight's gloom,
Our gazing thousands saw.

Look to our State! the poor man's right
Torn from him: and the sons of those
Whose blood in Freedom's sternest fight
Sprinkled the Jersey snows,

Outlawed within the land of Penn,
That Slavery's guilty fears might cease,
And those whom God created men
Toil on as brutes in peace.

Yet o'er the blackness of the storm
A bow of promise bends on high,
And gleams of sunshine, soft and warm,
Break through our clouded sky.

East, West, and North, the shout is heard,
Of freemen rising for the right:
Each valley hath its rallying word,
Each hill its signal light.

O'er Massachusetts' rocks of gray
The strengthening light of freedom shines,
Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay,
And Vermont's snow-hung pines!

From Hudson's frowning palisades
To Alleghany's laurelled crest,
O'er lakes and prairies, streams and glades,
It shines upon the West.

Speed on the light to those who dwell
In Slavery's land of woe and sin,
And through the blackness of that Hell,
Let Heaven's own light break in.

So shall the Southern conscience quake
Before that light poured full and strong,
So shall the Southern heart awake
To all the bondman's wrong.

And from that rich and sunny land
The song of grateful millions rise,
Like that of Israel's ransomed band
Beneath Arabia's skies:

And all who now are bound beneath
Our banner's shade, our eagle's wing,
From Slavery's night of moral death
To light and life shall spring.

Broken the bondman's chain, and gone
The master's guilt, and hate, and fear,
And unto both alike shall dawn
A New and Happy Year.

1839.

THE RELIC.

Written on receiving a cane wrought from a fragment of the wood-work of Pennsylvania Hall which the fire had spared.

Token of friendship true and tried,
From one whose fiery heart of youth
With mine has beaten, side by side,
For Liberty and Truth;
With honest pride the gift I take,
And prize it for the giver's sake.

But not alone because it tells
Of generous hand and heart sincere;
Around that gift of friendship dwells
A memory doubly dear;
Earth's noblest aim, man's holiest thought,
With that memorial frail inwrought!

Pure thoughts and sweet like flowers unfold,
And precious memories round it cling,
Even as the Prophet's rod of old
In beauty blossoming:
And buds of feeling, pure and good,
Spring from its cold unconscious wood.

Relic of Freedom's shrine! a brand
Plucked from its burning! let it be
Dear as a jewel from the hand
Of a lost friend to me!
Flower of a perished garland left,
Of life and beauty unbereft!

Oh, if the young enthusiast bears,
O'er weary waste and sea, the stone
Which crumbled from the Forum's stairs,
Or round the Parthenon;
Or olive-bough from some wild tree
Hung over old Thermopylæ:

If leaflets from some hero's tomb,
Or moss-wreath torn from ruins hoary;
Or faded flowers whose sisters bloom
On fields renowned in story;
Or fragment from the Alhambra's crest,
Or the gray rock by Druids blessed;

Sad Erin's shamrock greenly growing
Where Freedom led her stalwart kern,
Or Scotia's 'rough bur thistle' blowing
On Bruce's Bannockburn;
Or Runnymede's wild English rose,
Or lichen plucked from Sempach's snows!

If it be true that things like these
To heart and eye bright visions bring,
Shall not far holier memories
To this memorial cling?
Which needs no mellowing mist of time
To hide the crimson stains of crime!

Wreck of a temple, unprofaned;
Of courts where Peace with Freedom trod,
Lifting on high, with hands unstained,
Thanksgiving unto God;
Where Mercy's voice of love was pleading
For human hearts in bondage bleeding!

Where, midst the sound of rushing feet
And curses on the night-air flung,
That pleading voice rose calm and sweet
From woman's earnest tongue;
And Riot turned his scowling glance,
Awed, from her tranquil countenance!

That temple now in ruin lies!
The fire-stain on its shattered wall,
And open to the changing skies
Its black and roofless hall,
It stands before a nation's sight,
A gravestone over buried Right!

But from that ruin, as of old,
The fire-scorched stones themselves are crying,
And from their ashes white and cold
Its timbers are replying!
A voice which slavery cannot kill
Speaks from the crumbling arches still!

And even this relic from thy shrine,
O holy Freedom! hath to me
A potent power, a voice and sign
To testify of thee;
And, grasping it, methinks I feel
A deeper faith, a stronger zeal.

And not unlike that mystic rod,
Of old stretched o'er the Egyptian wave,
Which opened, in the strength of God,
A pathway for the slave,
It yet may point the bondman's way,
And turn the spoiler from his prey.

1839.

THE WORLD'S CONVENTION

OF THE FRIENDS OF EMANCIPATION, HELD IN LONDON IN 1840.

Joseph Sturge, the founder of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, proposed the calling of a world's anti-slavery convention, and the proposal was promptly seconded by the American Anti-Slavery Society. The call was addressed to 'friends of the slave of every nation and of every clime.'

Yes, let them gather! Summon forth
The pledged philanthropy of Earth.
From every land, whose hills have heard
The bugle blast of Freedom waking;
Or shrieking of her symbol-bird
From out his cloudy eyrie breaking:
Where Justice hath one worshipper,
Or truth one altar built to her;
Where'er a human eye is weeping
O'er wrongs which Earth's sad children know;
Where'er a single heart is keeping
Its prayerful watch with human woe:
Thence let them come, and greet each other,
And know in each a friend and brother!

Yes, let them come! from each green vale
Where England's old baronial halls
Still bear upon their storied walls
The grim crusader's rusted mail,
Battered by Paynim spear and brand
On Malta's rock or Syria's sand!
And mouldering pennon-staves once set
Within the soil of Palestine,
By Jordan and Gennesaret;
Or, borne with England's battle line,
O'er Acre's shattered turrets stooping,

Or, midst the camp their banners drooping,
With dews from hallowed Hermon wet,
A holier summons now is given
Than that gray hermit's voice of old,
Which unto all the winds of heaven
The banners of the Cross unrolled!
Not for the long-deserted shrine;
Not for the dull unconscious sod,
Which tells not by one lingering sign
That there the hope of Israel trod;
But for that truth, for which alone
In pilgrim eyes are sanctified
The garden moss, the mountain stone,
Whereon His holy sandals pressed,—
The fountain which His lip hath blessed,—
Whate'er hath touched His garment's hem
At Bethany or Bethlehem,
Or Jordan's river-side.
For Freedom in the name of Him
Who came to raise Earth's drooping poor,
To break the chain from every limb,
The bolt from every prison door!
For these, o'er all the earth hath passed
An ever-deepening trumpet blast,
As if an angel's breath had lent
Its vigor to the instrument.

And Wales, from Snowdon's mountain wall,
Shall startle at that thrilling call,
As if she heard her bards again;
And Erin's 'harp on Tara's wall'
Give out its ancient strain,
Mirthful and sweet, yet sad withal,—
The melody which Erin loves,
When o'er that harp, 'mid bursts of gladness
And slogan cries and lyke-wake sadness,
The hand of her O'Connell moves!
Scotland, from lake and tarn and rill,
And mountain hold, and heathery hill,
Shall catch and echo back the note,
As if she heard upon the air
Once more her Cameronian's prayer
And song of Freedom float.
And cheering echoes shall reply
From each remote dependency,
Where Britain's mighty sway is known,
In tropic sea or frozen zone;
Where'er her sunset flag is furling,
Or morning gun-fire's smoke is curling;
From Indian Bengal's groves of palm
And rosy fields and gales of balm,
Where Eastern pomp and power are rolled
Through regal Ava's gates of gold;
And from the lakes and ancient woods
And dim Canadian solitudes,
Whence, sternly from her rocky throne,
Queen of the North, Quebec looks down;
And from those bright and ransomed Isles
Where all unwonted Freedom smiles,
And the dark laborer still retains
The scar of slavery's broken chains!

From the hoar Alps, which sentinel
The gateways of the land of Tell,
Where morning's keen and earliest glance
On Jura's rocky wall is thrown,
And from the olive bowers of France
And vine groves garlanding the Rhone,—
'Friends of the Blacks,' as true and tried
As those who stood by Oge's side,
And heard the Haytien's tale of wrong,
Shall gather at that summons strong;
Broglie, Passy, and he whose song
Breathed over Syria's holy sod,
And in the paths which Jesus trod,
And murmured midst the hills which hem
Crownless and sad Jerusalem,
Hath echoes wheresoe'er the tone
Of Israel's prophet-lyre is known.

Still let them come; from Quito's walls,
And from the Orinoco's tide,
From Lima's Inca-haunted halls,
From Santa Fé and Yucatan,—
Men who by swart Guerrero's side
Proclaimed the deathless rights of man,
Broke every bond and fetter off,
And hailed in every sable serf
A free and brother Mexican!
Chiefs who across the Andes' chain
Have followed Freedom's flowing pennon,
And seen on Junin's fearful plain,
Glare o'er the broken ranks of Spain
The fire-burst of Bolivar's cannon!
And Hayti, from her mountain land,
Shall send the sons of those who hurled
Defiance from her blazing strand,

The war-gage from her Petion's hand,
Alone against a hostile world.

Nor all unmindful, thou, the while,
Land of the dark and mystic Nile!
Thy Moslem mercy yet may shame
All tyrants of a Christian name,
When in the shade of Gizeh's pile,
Or, where, from Abyssinian hills
El Gerek's upper fountain fills,
Or where from Mountains of the Moon
El Abiad bears his watery boon,
Where'er thy lotus blossoms swim
Within their ancient hallowed waters;
Where'er is heard the Coptic hymn,
Or song of Nubia's sable daughters;
The curse of slavery and the crime,
Thy bequest from remotest time,
At thy dark Mehemet's decree
Forevermore shall pass from thee;
And chains forsake each captive's limb
Of all those tribes, whose hills around
Have echoed back the cymbal sound
And victor horn of Ibrahim.

And thou whose glory and whose crime
To earth's remotest bound and clime,
In mingled tones of awe and scorn,
The echoes of a world have borne,
My country! glorious at thy birth,
A day-star flashing brightly forth,
The herald-sign of Freedom's dawn!
Oh, who could dream that saw thee then,
And watched thy rising from afar,
That vapors from oppression's fen
Would cloud the upward tending star?
Or, that earth's tyrant powers, which heard,
Awe-struck, the shout which hailed thy dawning,
Would rise so soon, prince, peer, and king,
To mock thee with their welcoming,
Like Hades when her thrones were stirred
To greet the down-cast Star of Morning!
'Aha! and art thou fallen thus?
Art thou become as one of us?'

Land of my fathers! there will stand,
Amidst that world-assembled band,
Those owning thy maternal claim
Unweakened by thy crime and shame;
The sad reprovers of thy wrong;
The children thou hast spurned so long.
Still with affection's fondest yearning
To their unnatural mother turning.
No traitors they! but tried and leal,
Whose own is but thy general weal,
Still blending with the patriot's zeal
The Christian's love for human kind,
To caste and climate unconfined.

A holy gathering! peaceful all:
No threat of war, no savage call
For vengeance on an erring brother!
But in their stead the godlike plan
To teach the brotherhood of man
To love and reverence one another,
As sharers of a common blood,
The children of a common God!
Yet, even at its lightest word,
Shall Slavery's darkest depths be stirred:
Spain, watching from her Moro's keep
Her slave-ships traversing the deep,
And Rio, in her strength and pride,
Lifting, along her mountain-side,
Her snowy battlements and towers,
Her lemon-groves and tropic bowers,
With bitter hate and sullen fear
Its freedom-giving voice shall hear;
And where my country's flag is flowing,
On breezes from Mount Vernon blowing,
Above the Nation's council halls,
Where Freedom's praise is loud and long,
While close beneath the outward walls
The driver plies his reeking thong;
The hammer of the man-thief falls,
O'er hypocritic cheek and brow
The crimson flush of shame shall glow:
And all who for their native land
Are pledging life and heart and hand,
Worn watchers o'er her changing weal,
Who for her tarnished honor feel,
Through cottage door and council-hall
Shall thunder an awakening call.
The pen along its page shall burn
With all intolerable scorn;
An eloquent rebuke shall go
On all the winds that Southward blow;
From priestly lips, now sealed and dumb,
Warning and dread appeal shall come,

Like those which Israel heard from him,
The Prophet of the Cherubim;
Or those which sad Esaias hurled
Against a sin-accursed world!
Its wizard leaves the Press shall fling
Unceasing from its iron wing,
With characters inscribed thereon,
As fearful in the despot's hall
As to the pomp of Babylon
The fire-sign on the palace wall!

And, from her dark iniquities,
Methinks I see my country rise:
Not challenging the nations round
To note her tardy justice done;
Her captives from their chains unbound,
Her prisons opening to the sun:
But tearfully her arms extending
Over the poor and unoffending;
Her regal emblem now no longer
A bird of prey, with talons reeking,
Above the dying captive shrieking,
But, spreading out her ample wing,
A broad, impartial covering,
The weaker sheltered by the stronger!
Oh, then to Faith's anointed eyes
The promised token shall be given;
And on a nation's sacrifice,
Atoning for the sin of years,
And wet with penitential tears,
The fire shall fall from Heaven!

1839.

MASSACHUSETTS TO VIRGINIA.

Written on reading an account of the proceedings of the citizens of Norfolk, Va., in reference to George Latimer, the alleged fugitive slave, who was seized in Boston without warrant at the request of James B. Grey, of Norfolk, claiming to be his master. The case caused great excitement North and South, and led to the presentation of a petition to Congress, signed by more than fifty thousand citizens of Massachusetts, calling for such laws and proposed amendments to the Constitution as should relieve the Commonwealth from all further participation in the crime of oppression. George Latimer himself was finally given free papers for the sum of four hundred dollars.

The blast from Freedom's Northern hills,
upon its Southern way,
Bears greeting to Virginia from Massachusetts Bay:
No word of haughty challenging, nor battle bugle's peal,
Nor steady tread of marching files, nor clang of horsemen's steel.

No trains of deep-mouthed cannon along our highways go;
Around our silent arsenals untrodden lies the snow;
And to the land-breeze of our ports, upon their errands far,
A thousand sails of commerce swell, but none are spread for war.

We hear thy threats, Virginia! thy stormy words and high,
Swell harshly on the Southern winds which melt along our sky;
Yet, not one brown, hard hand foregoes its honest labor here,
No hewer of our mountain oaks suspends his axe in fear.

Wild are the waves which lash the reefs along St. George's bank;
Cold on the shores of Labrador the fog lies white and dank;
Through storm, and wave, and blinding mist, stout are the hearts which man
The fishing-smacks of Marblehead, the sea-boats of Cape Ann.

The cold north light and wintry sun glare on their icy forms,
Bent grimly o'er their straining lines or wrestling with the storms;
Free as the winds they drive before, rough as the waves they roam,
They laugh to scorn the slaver's threat against their rocky home.

What means the Old Dominion? Hath she forgot the day
When o'er her conquered valleys swept the Briton's steel array?
How side by side, with sons of hers, the Massachusetts men
Encountered Tarleton's charge of fire, and stout Cornwallis, then?

Forgets she how the Bay State, in answer to the call
Of her old House of Burgesses, spoke out from Faneuil Hall?
When, echoing back her Henry's cry, came pulsing on each breath
Of Northern winds the thrilling sounds of 'Liberty or Death!'

What asks the Old Dominion? If now her sons have proved
False to their fathers' memory, false to the faith they loved;
If she can scoff at Freedom, and its great charter spurn,
Must we of Massachusetts from truth and duty turn?

We hunt your bondmen, flying from Slavery's hateful hell;
Our voices, at your bidding, take up the bloodhound's yell;
We gather, at your summons, above our fathers' graves,
From Freedom's holy altar-horns to tear your wretched slaves!

Thank God! not yet so vilely can Massachusetts bow;
The spirit of her early time is with her even now;
Dream not because her Pilgrim blood moves slow and calm and cool,
She thus can stoop her chainless neck, a sister's slave and tool!

All that a sister State should do, all that a free State may,
Heart, hand, and purse we proffer, as in our early day;
But that one dark loathsome burden ye must stagger with alone,
And reap the bitter harvest which ye yourselves have sown!

Hold, while ye may, your struggling slaves, and burden God's free air
With woman's shriek beneath the lash, and manhood's wild despair;
Cling closer to the 'cleaving curse' that writes upon your plains
The blasting of Almighty wrath against a land of chains.

Still shame your gallant ancestry, the cavaliers of old,
By watching round the shambles where human flesh is sold;
Gloat o'er the new-born child, and count his market value, when
The maddened mother's cry of woe shall pierce the slaver's den!

Lower than plummet soundeth, sink the Virginia name;
Plant, if ye will, your fathers' graves with rankest weeds of shame;
Be, if ye will, the scandal of God's fair universe;
We wash our hands forever of your sin and shame and curse.

A voice from lips whereon the coal from Freedom's shrine hath been,
Thrilled, as but yesterday, the hearts of Berkshire's mountain men:
The echoes of that solemn voice are sadly lingering still
In all our sunny valleys, on every wind-swept hill.

And when the prowling man-thief came hunting for his prey
Beneath the very shadow of Bunker's shaft of gray,
How, through the free lips of the son, the father's warning spoke;
How, from its bonds of trade and sect, the Pilgrim city broke!

A hundred thousand right arms were lifted up on high,
A hundred thousand voices sent back their loud reply;
Through the thronged towns of Essex the startling summons rang,
And up from bench and loom and wheel her young mechanics sprang!

The voice of free, broad Middlesex, of thousands as of one,
The shaft of Bunker calling to that of Lexington;
From Norfolk's ancient villages, from Plymouth's rocky bound
To where Nantucket feels the arms of ocean close her round;

From rich and rural Worcester, where through the calm repose
Of cultured vales and fringing woods the gentle Nashua flows,
To where Wachuset's wintry blasts the mountain larches stir,
Swelled up to Heaven the thrilling cry of 'God save Latimer!'

And sandy Barnstable rose up, wet with the salt sea spray;
And Bristol sent her answering shout down Narragansett Bay!
Along the broad Connecticut old Hampden felt the thrill,
And the cheer of Hampshire's woodmen swept down from Holyoke Hill.

The voice of Massachusetts! Of her free sons and daughters,
Deep calling unto deep aloud, the sound of many waters!
Against the burden of that voice what tyrant power shall stand?
No fetters in the Bay State! No slave upon her land!

Look to it well, Virginians! In calmness we have borne,
In answer to our faith and trust, your insult and your scorn;
You've spurned our kindest counsels; you've hunted for our lives;
And shaken round our hearths and homes your manacles and gyves!

We wage no war, we lift no arm, we fling no torch within
The fire-damps of the quaking mine beneath your soil of sin;
We leave ye with your bondmen, to wrestle, while ye can,
With the strong upward tendencies and godlike soul of man!

But for us and for our children, the vow which we have given
For freedom and humanity is registered in heaven;
No slave-hunt in our borders,—no pirate on our strand!
No fetters in the Bay State,—no slave upon our land!

1843.

THE CHRISTIAN SLAVE.

In a publication of L. F. Tasistro—*Random Shots and Southern Breezes*—is a description of a slave auction at New Orleans, at which the auctioneer recommended the woman on the stand as 'A GOOD CHRISTIAN!' It was not uncommon to see advertisements of slaves for sale, in which they were described as pious or as members of the church. In one advertisement a slave was noted as 'a Baptist preacher.'

A CHRISTIAN! going, gone!
Who bids for God's own image? for His grace,
Which that poor victim of the marketplace
Hath in her suffering won?

My God! can such things be?
Hast Thou not said that whatsoe'er is done
Unto Thy weakest and Thy humblest one
Is even done to Thee?

In that sad victim, then,
Child of Thy pitying love, I see Thee stand;
Once more the jest-word of a mocking band,
Bound, sold, and scourged again!

A Christian up for sale!
Wet with her blood your whips, o'ertask her frame,
Make her life loathsome with your wrong and shame,
Her patience shall not fail!

A heathen hand might deal
Back on your heads the gathered wrong of years:
But her low, broken prayer and nightly tears,
Ye neither heed nor feel.

Con well thy lesson o'er,
Thou prudent teacher, tell the toiling slave
No dangerous tale of Him who came to save
The outcast and the poor.

But wisely shut the ray
Of God's free Gospel from her simple heart,
And to her darkened mind alone impart
One stern command, Obey!

So shalt thou deftly raise
The market price of human flesh [50a]; and while
On thee, their pampered guest, the planters smile,
Thy church shall praise.

Grave, reverend men shall tell
From Northern pulpits how thy work was blest,
While in that vile South Sodom first and best,
Thy poor disciples sell.

Oh, shame! the Moslem thrall,
Who, with his master, to the Prophet kneels,
While turning to the sacred Kebla feels
His fetters break and fall.

Cheers for the turbaned Bey
Of robber-peopled Tunis! he hath torn
The dark slave-dungeons open, and hath borne
Their inmates into day:

But our poor slave in vain
Turns to the Christian shrine his aching eyes;
Its rites will only swell his market price,
And rivet on his chain.

God of all right! how long
Shall priestly robbers at Thine altar stand,
Lifting in prayer to Thee the bloody hand
And haughty brow of wrong?

Oh, from the fields of cane,
From the low rice-swamp, from the trader's cell;
From the black slave-ship's foul and loathsome hell,
And coffle's weary chain;

Hoarse, horrible, and strong,
Rises to Heaven that agonizing cry,
Filling the arches of the hollow sky,
How long, O God, how long?

1843.

THE SENTENCE OF JOHN L. BROWN.

John L. Brown, a young white man of South Carolina, was in 1844 sentenced to death for aiding a young slave woman, whom he loved and had married, to escape from slavery. In pronouncing the sentence Judge O'Neale addressed to the prisoner words of appalling blasphemy [of which the following passages give some notion]:—

'You are to die! To die an ignominious death—the death on the gallows! This announcement is, to you, I know, most appalling. Little did you dream of it when you stepped into the bar with an air as if you thought it was a fine frolic. But the consequences of crime are just such as you are realizing. Punishment often comes when it is least expected. Let me entreat you to take the present opportunity to commence the work of reformation. Time will be furnished you to prepare for the great change just before you. Of your past life I know nothing, except what your trial furnished. That told me that the crime for which you are to suffer was the consequence of a want of attention on your part to the duties of life. The strange woman snared you. She flattered you with her words, and you became her victim. The consequence was, that, led on by a desire to serve her, you committed the offence of aiding a slave to run away and depart from her master's service; and now, for it you are to die!

'You are a young man, and I fear you have been dissolute; and if so, these kindred vices have contributed a full measure to your ruin. Reflect on your past life, and make the only useful devotion of the remnant of your days in preparing for death.

'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth is the language of inspired wisdom. This comes home appropriately to you in this trying moment.

'You are young; quite too young to be where you are. If you had remembered your Creator in your past days, you would not now be in a felon's place, to receive a felon's judgment. Still, it is not too late to remember your Creator. He calls early, and He calls late. He stretches out the arms of a Father's love to you—to the vilest sinner—and says: "Come unto Me and be saved." You can perhaps read. If so, read the Scriptures; read them without note, and without comment; and pray to God for His assistance; and you will be able to say when you pass from prison to execution, as a poor slave said under

similar circumstances: "I am glad my Friday has come." If you cannot read the Scriptures, the ministers of our holy religion will be ready to aid you. They will read and explain to you until you will be able to understand; and understanding, to call upon the only One who can help you and save you—Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. To Him I commend you. And through Him may you have that opening of the Day-Spring of mercy from on high, which shall bless you here, and crown you as a saint in an everlasting world, forever and ever.

'The sentence of the law is that you be taken hence to the place from whence you came last; thence to the jail of Fairfield District; and that there you be closely and securely confined until Friday, the 26th day of April next; on which day, between the hours of ten in the forenoon and two in the afternoon, you will be taken to the place of public execution, and there be hanged by the neck till your body be dead. And may God have mercy on your soul!'

No event in the history of the anti-slavery struggle so stirred the two hemispheres as did this dreadful sentence. A cry of horror was heard from Europe. In the British House of Lords Brougham and Denman spoke of it with mingled pathos and indignation. Thirteen hundred clergymen and church officers in Great Britain addressed a memorial to the churches of South Carolina against the atrocity. Indeed, so strong was the pressure of the sentiment of abhorrence and disgust that South Carolina yielded to it, and the sentence was commuted to scourging and banishment.

Ho! thou who seekest late and long
A License from the Holy Book
For brutal lust and fiendish wrong,
Man of the Pulpit, look!
Lift up those cold and atheist eyes,
This ripe fruit of thy teaching see;
And tell us how to heaven will rise
The incense of this sacrifice—
This blossom of the gallows tree!

Search out for slavery's hour of need
Some fitting text of sacred writ;
Give Heaven the credit of a deed
Which shames the nether pit.
Kneel, smooth blasphemer, unto Him
Whose truth is on thy lips a lie;
Ask that His bright winged cherubim
May bend around that scaffold grim
To guard and bless and sanctify.

O champion of the people's cause!
Suspend thy loud and vain rebuke
Of foreign wrong and Old World's laws,
Man of the Senate, look!
Was this the promise of the free,
The great hope of our early time,
That slavery's poison vine should be
Upborne by Freedom's prayer-nursed tree
O'erclustered with such fruits of crime?

Send out the summons East and West,
And South and North, let all be there
Where he who pitied the oppressed
Swings out in sun and air.
Let not a Democratic hand
The grisly hangman's task refuse;
There let each loyal patriot stand,
Awaiting slavery's command,
To twist the rope and draw the noose!

But vain is irony—unmeet
Its cold rebuke for deeds which start
In fiery and indignant beat
The pulses of the heart.
Leave studied wit and guarded phrase
For those who think but do not feel;
Let men speak out in words which raise
Where'er they fall, an answering blaze
Like flints which strike the fire from steel.

Still let a mousing priesthood ply
Their garbled text and gloss of sin,
And make the lettered scroll deny
Its living soul within:
Still let the place-fed, titled knave
Plead robbery's right with purchased lips,
And tell us that our fathers gave
For Freedom's pedestal, a slave,
The frieze and moulding, chains and whips!

But ye who own that Higher Law
Whose tablets in the heart are set,
Speak out in words of power and awe
That God is living yet!

Breathe forth once more those tones sublime
Which thrilled the burdened prophet's lyre,
And in a dark and evil time
Smote down on Israel's fast of crime
And gift of blood, a rain of fire!

Oh, not for us the graceful lay
To whose soft measures lightly move
The footsteps of the faun and fay,
O'er-locked by mirth and love!
But such a stern and startling strain
As Britain's hunted bards flung down
From Snowden to the conquered plain,
Where harshly clanked the Saxon chain,
On trampled field and smoking town.

By Liberty's dishonored name,
By man's lost hope and failing trust,
By words and deeds which bow with shame
Our foreheads to the dust,
By the exulting strangers' sneer,
Borne to us from the Old World's thrones,
And by their victims' grief who hear,
In sunless mines and dungeons drear,
How Freedom's land her faith disowns!

Speak out in acts. The time for words
Has passed, and deeds suffice alone;
In vain against the clang of swords
The wailing pipe is blown!
Act, act in God's name, while ye may!
Smite from the church her leprous limb!
Throw open to the light of day
The bondman's cell, and break away
The chains the state has bound on him!

Ho! every true and living soul,
To Freedom's perilled altar bear
The Freeman's and the Christian's whole
Tongue, pen, and vote, and prayer!
One last, great battle for the right—
One short, sharp struggle to be free!
To do is to succeed—our fight
Is waged in Heaven's approving sight;
The smile of God is Victory.

1844.

TEXAS.

VOICE OF NEW ENGLAND.

The five poems immediately following indicate the intense feeling of the friends of freedom in view of the annexation of Texas, with its vast territory sufficient, as was boasted, for six new slave States. [The first poem seems to have been written at the earnest entreaty of Lowell, who called on Whittier 'to cry aloud and spare not against the accursed Texas plot.']

Up the hillside, down the glen,
Rouse the sleeping citizen;
Summon out the might of men!

Like a lion growling low,
Like a night-storm rising slow,
Like the tread of unseen foe;

It is coming, it is nigh!
Stand your homes and altars by;
On your own free thresholds die.

Clang the bells in all your spires;
On the gray hills of your sires
Fling to heaven your signal-fires.

From Wachuset, lone and bleak,
Unto Berkshire's tallest peak,
Let the flame-tongued heralds speak.

Oh, for God and duty stand,
Heart to heart and hand to hand,
Round the old graves of the land.

Whoso shrinks or falters now,
Whoso to the yoke would bow,
Brand the craven on his brow!

Freedom's soil hath only place
For a free and fearless race,
None for traitors false and base.

Perish party, perish clan;
Strike together while ye can,
Like the arm of one strong man.

Like that angel's voice sublime,
Heard above a world of crime,
Crying of the end of time;

With one heart and with one mouth,
Let the North unto the South
Speak the word befitting both:

'What though Issachar be strong!
Ye may load his back with wrong
Overmuch and over long:

'Patience with her cup o'errun,
With her weary thread outspun,
Murmurs that her work is done.

'Make our Union-bond a chain,
Weak as tow in Freedom's strain
Link by link shall snap in twain.

'Vainly shall your sand-wrought rope
Bind the starry cluster up,
Shattered over heaven's blue cope!

'Give us bright though broken rays,
Rather than eternal haze,
Clouding o'er the full-orbed blaze.

'Take your land of sun and bloom;
Only leave to Freedom room
For her plough, and forge, and loom;

'Take your slavery-blackened vales;
Leave us but our own free gales,
Blowing on our thousand sails.

'Boldly, or with treacherous art,
Strike the blood-wrought chain apart;
Break the Union's mighty heart;

'Work the ruin, if ye will;
Pluck upon your heads an ill
Which shall grow and deepen still.

'With your bondman's right arm bare,
With his heart of black despair,
Stand alone, if stand ye dare!

'Onward with your fell design;
Dig the gulf and draw the line:
Fire beneath your feet the mine!

'Deeply, when the wide abyss
Yawns between your land and this,
Shall ye feel your helplessness.

'By the hearth, and in the bed,
Shaken by a look or tread,
Ye shall own a guilty dread.

'And the curse of unpaid toil,
Downward through your generous soil
Like a fire shall burn and spoil.

'Our bleak hills shall bud and blow,
Vines our rocks shall overgrow,
Plenty in our valleys flow;—

'And when vengeance clouds your skies,
Hither shall ye turn your eyes,
As the lost on Paradise!

'We but ask our rocky strand,
Freedom's true and brother band,
Freedom's strong and honest hand;

'Valleys by the slave untrod,
And the Pilgrim's mountain sod,
Blessëd of our fathers' God!'

1844.

TO FANEUIL HALL.

Written in 1844, on reading a call by 'a Massachusetts Freeman' for a meeting in Faneuil Hall of the citizens of Massachusetts, without distinction of party, opposed to the annexation of Texas and the aggressions of South Carolina, and in favor of decisive action against slavery.

Men! if manhood still ye claim,
If the Northern pulse can thrill,
Roused by wrong or stung by shame,
Freely, strongly still;
Let the sounds of traffic die:
Shut the mill-gate, leave the stall,
Fling the axe and hammer by;
Throng to Faneuil Hall!

Wrongs which freemen never brooked,
Dangers grim and fierce as they,
Which, like couching lions, looked
On your fathers' way;
These your instant zeal demand,
Shaking with their earthquake-call
Every rood of Pilgrim land,
Ho, to Faneuil Hall!

From your capes and sandy bars,
From your mountain-ridges cold,
Through whose pines the westering stars
Stoop their crowns of gold;

Come, and with your footsteps wake
Echoes from that holy wall;
Once again, for Freedom's sake,
Rock your fathers' hall!

Up, and tread beneath your feet
Every cord by party spun:
Let your hearts together beat
As the heart of one.
Banks and tariffs, stocks and trade,
Let them rise or let them fall:
Freedom asks your common aid,—
Up, to Faneuil Hall!

Up, and let each voice that speaks
Ring from thence to Southern plains,
Sharply as the blow which breaks
Prison-bolts and chains!
Speak as well becomes the free:
Dreaded more than steel or ball,
Shall your calmest utterance be,
Heard from Faneuil Hall!

Have they wronged us? Let us then
Render back nor threats nor prayers;
Have they chained our free-born men?
Let us unchain theirs!
Up, your banner leads the van,
Blazoned, 'Liberty for all!'
Finish what your sires began!
Up, to Faneuil Hall!

TO MASSACHUSETTS.

What though around thee blazes
No fiery rallying sign?
From all thy own high places,
Give Heaven the light of thine!
What though unthrilled, unmoving,
The statesman stand apart,
And comes no warm approving
From Mammon's crowded mart?

Still let the land be shaken
By a summons of thine own!
By all save truth forsaken,
Stand fast with that alone!
Shrink not from strife unequal!
With the best is always hope;
And ever in the sequel
God holds the right side up!

But when, with thine uniting,
Come voices long and loud,
And far-off hills are writing
Thy fire-words on the cloud;
When from Penobscot's fountains
A deep response is heard,
And across the Western mountains
Rolls back thy rallying word;

Shall thy line of battle falter,
With its allies just in view?
Oh, by hearth and holy altar,
My fatherland, be true!
Fling abroad thy scrolls of Freedom!
Speed them onward far and fast!
Over hill and valley speed them,
Like the sibyl's on the blast!

Lo! the Empire State is shaking
The shackles from her hand;
With the rugged North is waking
The level sunset land!
On they come, the free battalions!
East and West and North they come,
And the heart-beat of the millions
Is the beat of Freedom's drum.

'To the tyrant's plot no favor!
No heed to place-fed knaves!
Bar and bolt the door forever
Against the land of slaves!'
Hear it, mother Earth, and hear it,
The heavens above us spread!
The land is roused,—its spirit
Was sleeping, but not dead!

1844.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

God bless New Hampshire! from her granite peaks
Once more the voice of Stark and Langdon speaks.
The long-bound vassal of the exulting South
For very shame her self-forged chain has broken;
Torn the black seal of slavery from her mouth,
And in the clear tones of her old time spoken!

Oh, all undreamed-of, all unhoped-for changes!
The tyrant's ally proves his sternest foe;
To all his biddings, from her mountain ranges,
New Hampshire thunders an indignant No!
Who is it now despairs? Oh, faint of heart,
Look upward to those Northern mountains cold,
Flouted by Freedom's victor-flag unrolled,
And gather strength to bear a manlier part!
All is not lost. The angel of God's blessing
Encamps with Freedom on the field of fight;
Still to her banner, day by day, are pressing,
Unlooked-for allies, striking for the right!
Courage, then, Northern hearts! Be firm, be true:
What one brave State hath done, can ye not also do?

1845.

THE PINE-TREE.[51]

Written on hearing that the Anti-Slavery Resolves of Stephen C. Phillips had been rejected by the Whig Convention in Faneuil Hall, in 1846.

Lift again the stately emblem on the Bay State's rusted shield,
Give to Northern winds the Pine-Tree on our banner's tattered field.
Sons of men who sat in council with their Bibles round the board,
Answering England's royal missive with a firm, 'Thus saith the Lord!'
Rise again for home and freedom! set the battle in array!
What the fathers did of old time we their sons must do to-day.

Tell us not of banks and tariffs, cease your paltry pedler cries;
Shall the good State sink her honor that your gambling stocks may rise?
Would ye barter man for cotton? That your gains may sum up higher,
Must we kiss the feet of Moloch, pass our children through the fire?
Is the dollar only real? God and truth and right a dream?
Weighed against your lying ledgers must our manhood kick the beam?

O my God! for that free spirit, which of old in Boston town
Smote the Province House with terror, struck the crest of Andros down!
For another strong-voiced Adams in the city's streets to cry,
'Up for God and Massachusetts! Set your feet on Mammon's lie!
Perish banks and perish traffic, spin your cotton's latest pound,
But in Heaven's name keep your honor, keep the heart o' the Bay State sound!'

Where's the man for Massachusetts? Where's the voice to speak her free?
Where's the hand to light up bonfires from her mountains to the sea?
Beats her Pilgrim pulse no longer? Sits she dumb in her despair?
Has she none to break the silence? Has she none to do and dare?
O my God! for one right worthy to lift up her rusted shield,
And to plant again the Pine-Tree in her banner's tattered field!

1846.

TO A SOUTHERN STATESMAN.

John C. Calhoun, who had strongly urged the extension of slave territory by the annexation of Texas, even if it should involve a war with England, was unwilling to promote the acquisition of Oregon, which would enlarge the Northern domain of freedom, and pleaded as an excuse the peril of foreign complications which he had defied when the interests of slavery were involved.

Is this thy voice whose treble notes of fear
Wail in the wind? And dost thou shake to hear,
Actæon-like, the bay of thine own hounds,
Spurning the leash, and leaping o'er their bounds?
Sore-baffled statesman! when thy eager hand,
With game afoot, unslipped the hungry pack,
To hunt down Freedom in her chosen land,
Hadst thou no fear, that, erelong, doubling back,
These dogs of thine might snuff on Slavery's track?
Where's now the boast, which even thy guarded tongue,
Cold, calm, and proud, in the teeth o' the Senate flung,
O'er the fulfilment of thy baleful plan,
Like Satan's triumph at the fall of man?
How stood'st thou then, thy feet on Freedom planting,
And pointing to the lurid heaven afar,
Whence all could see, through the south windows slanting,
Crimson as blood, the beams of that Lone Star!
The Fates are just; they give us but our own;
Nemesis ripens what our hands have sown.
There is an Eastern story, not unknown,
Doubtless, to thee, of one whose magic skill
Called demons up his water-jars to fill;
Deftly and silently, they did his will,
But, when the task was done, kept pouring still.
In vain with spell and charm the wizard wrought,
Faster and faster were the buckets brought,
Higher and higher rose the flood around,
Till the fiends clapped their hands above their master drowned!
So, Carolinian, it may prove with thee,
For God still overrules man's schemes, and takes
Craftiness in its self-set snare, and makes
The wrath of man to praise Him. It may be,
That the roused spirits of Democracy
May leave to freer States the same wide door
Through which thy slave-cursed Texas entered in,
From out the blood and fire, the wrong and sin,
Of the stormed city and the ghastly plain,
Beat by hot hail, and wet with bloody rain,
The myriad-handed pioneer may pour,
And the wild West with the roused North combine
And heave the engineer of evil with his mine.

1846.

AT WASHINGTON.

Suggested by a visit to the city of Washington, in the 12th month of 1845. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

With a cold and wintry noon-light
On its roofs and steeples shed,
Shadows weaving with the sunlight
From the gray sky overhead,
Broadly, vaguely, all around me, lies the
half-built town outspread.

Through this broad street, restless ever,
Ebbs and flows a human tide,
Wave on wave a living river;
Wealth and fashion side by side;
Toiler, idler, slave and master, in the
same quick current glide.

Underneath yon dome, whose coping
Springs above them, vast and tall,
Grave men in the dust are groping
For the largess, base and small,
Which the hand of Power is scattering,
crumbs which from its table fall.

Base of heart! They vilely barter
Honor's wealth for party's place;
Step by step on Freedom's charter
Leaving footprints of disgrace;
For to-day's poor pittance turning from
the great hope of their race.

Yet, where festal lamps are throwing
Glory round the dancer's hair,
Gold-tressed, like an angel's, flowing
Backward on the sunset air;
And the low quick pulse of music beats
its measure sweet and rare:

There to-night shall woman's glances,
Star-like, welcome give to them;
Fawning fools with shy advances
Seek to touch their garments' hem,
With the tongue of flattery glozing deeds
which God and Truth condemn.

From this glittering lie my vision
Takes a broader, sadder range,
Full before me have arisen
Other pictures dark and strange;
From the parlor to the prison must the
scene and witness change.

Hark! the heavy gate is swinging
On its hinges, harsh and slow;
One pale prison lamp is flinging
On a fearful group below
Such a light as leaves to terror whatsoe'er
it does not show.

Pitying God! Is that a woman
On whose wrist the shackles clash?
Is that shriek she utters human,
Underneath the stinging lash?
Are they men whose eyes of madness from
that sad procession flash?

Still the dance goes gayly onward!
What is it to Wealth and Pride
That without the stars are looking
On a scene which earth should hide?
That the slave-ship lies in waiting, rocking
on Potomac's tide!

Vainly to that mean Ambition
Which, upon a rival's fall,
Winds above its old condition,
With a reptile's slimy crawl,
Shall the pleading voice of sorrow, shall
the slave in anguish call.

Vainly to the child of Fashion,
Giving to ideal woe
Graceful luxury of compassion,
Shall the stricken mourner go;
Hateful seems the earnest sorrow, beautiful
the hollow show!

Nay, my words are all too sweeping:
In this crowded human mart,
Feeling is not dead, but sleeping;
Man's strong will and woman's heart,
In the coming strife for Freedom, yet
shall bear their generous part.

And from yonder sunny valleys,
Southward in the distance lost,
Freedom yet shall summon allies
Worthier than the North can boast,
With the Evil by their hearth-stones
grappling at severer cost.

Now, the soul alone is willing:
Faint the heart and weak the knee;
And as yet no lip is thrilling
With the mighty words, 'Be Free!'
Tarrieth long the land's Good Angel, but
his advent is to be!

Meanwhile, turning from the revel
To the prison-cell my sight,
For intenser hate of evil,
For a keener sense of right,
Shaking off thy dust, I thank thee, City
of the Slaves, to-night!

'To thy duty now and ever!
Dream no more of rest or stay:
Give to Freedom's great endeavor
All thou art and hast to-day:'
Thus, above the city's murmur, saith a
Voice, or seems to say.

Ye with heart and vision gifted
To discern and love the right,
Whose worn faces have been lifted
To the slowly-growing light,
Where from Freedom's sunrise drifted
slowly back the murk of night!

Ye who through long years of trial
Still have held your purpose fast,
While a lengthening shade the dial
From the westering sunshine cast,
And of hope each hour's denial seemed
an echo of the last!

O my brothers! O my sisters!
Would to God that ye were near,
Gazing with me down the vistas
Of a sorrow strange and drear;
Would to God that ye were listeners to
the Voice I seem to hear!

With the storm above us driving,
With the false earth mined below,
Who shall marvel if thus striving
We have counted friend as foe;
Unto one another giving in the darkness blow for blow.

Well it may be that our natures
Have grown sterner and more hard,
And the freshness of their features
Somewhat harsh and battle-scarred,
And their harmonies of feeling overtasked and rudely jarred.

Be it so. It should not swerve us
From a purpose true and brave;
Dearer Freedom's rugged service
Than the pastime of the slave;
Better is the storm above it than the quiet of the grave.

Let us then, uniting, bury
All our idle feuds in dust,
And to future conflicts carry
Mutual faith and common trust;
Always he who most forgiveth in his brother is most just.

From the eternal shadow rounding
All our sun and starlight here,
Voices of our lost ones sounding
Bid us be of heart and cheer,
Through the silence, down the spaces, falling on the inward ear.

Know we not our dead are looking
Downward with a sad surprise,
All our strife of words rebuking
With their mild and loving eyes?
Shall we grieve the holy angels? Shall we cloud their blessed skies?

Let us draw their mantles o'er us
Which have fallen in our way;
Let us do the work before us,
Cheerly, bravely, while we may,
Ere the long night-silence cometh, and with us it is not day!

THE BRANDED HAND.

Captain Jonathan Walker, of Harwich, Mass., was solicited by several fugitive slaves at Pensacola, Florida, to carry them in his vessel to the British West Indies. Although well aware of the great hazard of the enterprise he attempted to comply with the request, but was seized at sea by an American vessel, consigned to the authorities at Key West, and thence sent back to Pensacola, where, after a long and rigorous confinement in prison, he was tried and sentenced to be branded on his right hand with the letters 'S. S.' (slave-stealer) and amerced in a heavy fine.

Welcome home again, brave seaman! with thy thoughtful brow and gray,
And the old heroic spirit of our earlier, better day;
With that front of calm endurance, on whose steady nerve in vain
Pressed the iron of the prison, smote the fiery shafts of pain!

Is the tyrant's brand upon thee? Did the brutal cravens aim
To make God's truth thy falsehood, His holiest work thy shame?
When, all blood-quenched, from the torture the iron was withdrawn,
How laughed their evil angel the baffled fools to scorn!

They change to wrong the duty which God hath written out
On the great heart of humanity, too legible for doubt!
They, the loathsome moral lepers, blotched from footsole up to crown,
Give to shame what God hath given unto honor and renown!

Why, that brand is highest honor! than its traces never yet
Upon old armorial hatchments was a prouder blazon set;
And thy unborn generations, as they tread our rocky strand,
Shall tell with pride the story of their father's branded hand!

As the Templar home was welcome, bearing back from Syrian wars
The scars of Arab lances and of Paynim scimitars,
The pallor of the prison, and the shackle's crimson span,
So we meet thee, so we greet thee, truest friend of God and man.

He suffered for the ransom of the dear Redeemer's grave,
Thou for His living presence in the bound and bleeding slave;
He for a soil no longer by the feet of angels trod,
Thou for the true Shechinah, the present home of God!

For, while the jurist, sitting with the slave-whip o'er him swung,
From the tortured truths of freedom the lie of slavery wrung,
And the solemn priest to Moloch, on each God-deserted shrine,
Broke the bondman's heart for bread, poured the bondman's blood for wine;

While the multitude in blindness to a far-off Saviour knelt,
And spurned, the while, the temple where a present Saviour dwelt;
Thou beheld'st Him in the task-field, in the prison shadows dim,
And thy mercy to the bondman, it was mercy unto Him!

In thy lone and long night-watches, sky above and wave below,
Thou didst learn a higher wisdom than the babbling schoolmen know;
God's stars and silence taught thee, as His angels only can,
That the one sole sacred thing beneath the cope of heaven is Man!

That he who treads profanely on the scrolls of law and creed,
In the depth of God's great goodness may find mercy in his need;
But woe to him who crushes the soul with chain and rod,
And herds with lower natures the awful form of God!

Then lift that manly right-hand, bold ploughman of the wave!
Its branded palm shall prophesy, 'Salvation to the Slave!'
Hold up its fire-wrought language, that whoso reads may feel
His heart swell strong within him, his sinews change to steel.

Hold it up before our sunshine, up against our Northern air;
Ho! men of Massachusetts, for the love of God, look there!
Take it henceforth for your standard, like the Bruce's heart of yore,
In the dark strife closing round ye, let that hand be seen before!

And the masters of the slave-land shall tremble at that sign,
When it points its finger Southward along the Puritan line:
Can the craft of State avail them? Can a Christless church withstand,
In the van of Freedom's onset, the coming of that hand?

1846.

THE FREED ISLANDS.

Written for the anniversary celebration of the first of August, at Milton, 1846. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

A few brief years have passed away
Since Britain drove her million slaves
Beneath the tropic's fiery ray:
God willed their freedom; and to-day
Life blooms above those island graves!

He spoke! across the Carib Sea,
We heard the clash of breaking chains,
And felt the heart-throb of the free,
The first, strong pulse of liberty
Which thrilled along the bondman's veins.

Though long delayed, and far, and slow,
The Briton's triumph shall be ours:
Wears slavery here a prouder brow
Than that which twelve short years ago
Scowled darkly from her island bowers?

Mighty alike for good or ill
With Mother-land, we fully share
The Saxon strength, the nerve of steel,
The tireless energy of will,
The power to do, the pride to dare.

What she has done can we not do?
Our hour and men are both at hand;
The blast which Freedom's angel blew
O'er her green islands, echoes through
Each valley of our forest land.

Hear it, old Europe! we have sworn
The death of slavery. When it falls,
Look to your vassals in their turn,
Your poor dumb millions, crushed and worn,
Your prisons and your palace walls!

O kingly mockers! scoffing show
What deeds in Freedom's name we do;
Yet know that every taunt ye throw
Across the waters, goads our slow
Progression towards the right and true.

Not always shall your outraged poor,
Appalled by democratic crime,
Grind as their fathers ground before;
The hour which sees our prison door
Swing wide shall be their triumph time.

On then, my brothers! every blow
Ye deal is felt the wide earth through;
Whatever here uplifts the low
Or humbles Freedom's hateful foe,
Blesses the Old World through the New.

Take heart! The promised hour draws near;
I hear the downward beat of wings,
And Freedom's trumpet sounding clear:
'Joy to the people! woe and fear
To new-world tyrants, old-world kings!'

A LETTER

Supposed to be written by the chairman of the 'Central Clique' at Concord, N. H., to the Hon. M. N., Jr., at Washington, giving the result of the election.

The following verses were published in the *Boston Chronotype* in 1846. They refer to the contest in New Hampshire, which resulted in the defeat of the pro-slavery Democracy, and in the election of John P. Hale to the United States Senate. Although their authorship was not acknowledged, it was strongly suspected. They furnish a specimen of the way, on the whole rather good-natured, in which the liberty-lovers of half a century ago answered the social and political outlawry and mob violence to which they were subjected.

'T is over, Moses! All is lost!
I hear the bells a-ringing;
Of Pharaoh and his Red Sea host
I hear the Free-Wills singing.[52]
We 're routed, Moses, horse and foot,
If there be truth in figures,
With Federal Whigs in hot pursuit,
And Hale, and all the 'niggers.'

Alack! alas! this month or more
We 've felt a sad foreboding;
Our very dreams the burden bore
Of central cliques exploding;
Before our eyes a furnace shone,
Where heads of dough were roasting,
And one we took to be your own
The traitor Hale was toasting!

Our Belknap brother heard with awe[53]
The Congo minstrels playing;
At Pittsfield Reuben Leavitt saw[54]
The ghost of Storrs a-praying;
And Carroll's woods were sad to see,
With black-winged crows a-darting;
And Black Snout looked on Ossipee,
New-glossed with Day and Martin.

We thought the 'Old Man of the Notch'
His face seemed changing wholly—
His lips seemed thick; his nose seemed flat;
His misty hair looked woolly;
And Coös teamsters, shrieking, fled
From the metamorphosed figure.
'Look there!' they said, 'the Old Stone Head
Himself is turning nigger!'

The schoolhouse, out of Canaan hauled[55]
Seemed turning on its track again,
And like a great swamp-turtle crawled
To Canaan village back again,

Shook off the mud and settled flat
Upon its underpinning;
A nigger on its ridge-pole sat,
From ear to ear a-grinning.

Gray H——d heard o' nights the sound
Of rail-cars onward faring;
Right over Democratic ground
The iron horse came tearing.
A flag waved o'er that spectral train,
As high as Pittsfield steeple;
Its emblem was a broken chain,
Its motto: 'To the people!'

I dreamed that Charley took his bed,
With Hale for his physician;
His daily dose an old 'unread
And unreferred' petition.
There Hayes and Tuck as nurses sat,
As near as near could be, man;
They leeched him with the 'Democrat';
They blistered with the 'Freeman.'

Ah! grisly portents! What avail
Your terrors of forewarning?
We wake to find the nightmare Hale
Astride our breasts at morning!
From Portsmouth lights to Indian stream
Our foes their throats are trying;
The very factory-spindles seem
To mock us while they 're flying.

The hills have bonfires; in our streets
Flags flout us in our faces;
The newsboys, peddling off their sheets,
Are hoarse with our disgraces.
In vain we turn, for gibing wit
And shoutings follow after,
As if old Kearsarge had split
His granite sides with laughter!

What boots it that we pelted out [56]
The anti-slavery women,
And bravely strewed their hall about
With tattered lace and trimming?
Was it for such a sad reverse
Our mobs became peacemakers,
And kept their tar and wooden horse
For Englishmen and Quakers?

For this did shifty Atherton
Make gag rules for the Great House? [57]
Wiped we for this our feet upon
Petitions in our State House?
Plied we for this our axe of doom,
No stubborn traitor sparing,
Who scoffed at our opinion loom,
And took to homespun wearing?

Ah, Moses! hard it is to scan
These crooked providences,
Deducing from the wisest plan
The saddest consequences!
Strange that, in trampling as was meet
The nigger-men's petition,
We sprung a mine beneath our feet
Which opened up perdition.

How goodly, Moses, was the game
In which we 've long been actors,
Supplying freedom with the name
And slavery with the practice!
Our smooth words fed the people's mouth,
Their ears our party rattle;
We kept them headed to the South,
As drovers do their cattle.

But now our game of politics
The world at large is learning;
And men grown gray in all our tricks
State's evidence are turning.
Votes and preambles subtly spun
They cram with meanings louder,
And load the Democratic gun
With abolition powder.

The ides of June! Woe worth the day
When, turning all things over,
The traitor Hale shall make his hay
From Democratic clover!
Who then shall take him in the law,
Who punish crime so flagrant?
Whose hand shall serve, whose pen shall draw,
A writ against that 'vagrant'?

Alas! no hope is left us here,
And one can only pine for
The envied place of overseer
Of slaves in Carolina!

Pray, Moses, give Calhoun the wink,
And see what pay he 's giving!
We 've practised long enough, we think,
To know the art of driving.

And for the faithful rank and file,
Who know their proper stations,
Perhaps it may be worth their while
To try the rice plantations.
Let Hale exult, let Wilson scoff,
To see us southward scamper;
The slaves, we know, are 'better off
Than laborers in New Hampshire!'

LINES

FROM A LETTER TO A YOUNG CLERICAL FRIEND.

A STRENGTH Thy service cannot tire,
A faith which doubt can never dim,
A heart of love, a lip of fire,
O Freedom's God! be Thou to him!

Speak through him words of power and fear,
As through Thy prophet bards of old,
And let a scornful people hear
Once more Thy Sinai-thunders rolled.

For lying lips Thy blessing seek,
And hands of blood are raised to Thee,
And on Thy children, crushed and weak,
The oppressor plants his kneeling knee.

Let then, O God! Thy servant dare
Thy truth in all its power to tell,
Unmask the priestly thieves, and tear
The Bible from the grasp of hell!

From hollow rite and narrow span
Of law and sect by Thee released,
Oh, teach him that the Christian man
Is holier than the Jewish priest.

Chase back the shadows, gray and old,
Of the dead ages, from his way,
And let his hopeful eyes behold
The dawn of Thy millennial day;

That day when fettered limb and mind
Shall know the truth which maketh free,
And he alone who loves his kind
Shall, childlike, claim the love of Thee!

DANIEL NEALL.

Dr. Neall, a worthy disciple of that venerated philanthropist, Warner Mifflin, whom the Girondist statesman, Jean Pierre Brissot, pronounced 'an angel of mercy, the best man he ever knew,' was one of the noble band of Pennsylvania abolitionists, whose bravery was equalled only by their gentleness and tenderness. He presided at the great anti-slavery meeting in Pennsylvania Hall, May 17, 1838, when the Hall was surrounded by a furious mob. I was standing near him while the glass of the windows broken by missiles showered over him, and a deputation from the rioters forced its way to the platform, and demanded that the meeting should be closed at once. Dr. Neall drew up his tall form to its utmost height.

'I am here,' he said, 'the president of this meeting, and I will be torn in pieces before I leave my place at your dictation. Go back to those who sent you. I shall do my duty.' Some years after, while visiting his relatives in his native State of Delaware, he was dragged from the house of his friends by a mob of slave-holders and brutally maltreated. He bore it like a martyr of the old times; and when released, told his persecutors that he forgave them, for it was not they but Slavery which had done the wrong. If they should ever be in Philadelphia and needed hospitality or aid, let them call on him.

I.

FRIEND of the Slave, and yet the friend of all;
Lover of peace, yet ever foremost when
The need of battling Freedom called for men
To plant the banner on the outer wall;
Gentle and kindly, ever at distress
Melted to more than woman's tenderness
Yet firm and steadfast, at his duty's post
Fronting the violence of a maddened host,
Like some gray rock from which the waves are tossed!
Knowing his deeds of love, men questioned not
The faith of one whose walk and word were right;
Who tranquilly in Life's great task-field wrought,
And, side by side with evil, scarcely caught
A stain upon his pilgrim garb of white:

Prompt to redress another's wrong, his own
Leaving to Time and Truth and Penitence alone.

II.

Such was our friend. Formed on the good old plan,
A true and brave and downright honest man!
He blew no trumpet in the market-place,
Nor in the church with hypocritic face
Supplied with cant the lack of Christian grace;
Loathing pretence, he did with cheerful will
What others talked of while their hands were still;
And, while 'Lord, Lord!' the pious tyrants cried,
Who, in the poor, their Master crucified,
His daily prayer, far better understood
In acts than words, was simply doing good.
So calm, so constant was his rectitude,
That by his loss alone we know its worth,
And feel how true a man has walked with us on earth.

6th, 6th month, 1846.

SONG OF SLAVES IN THE DESERT.

'*Sebah, Oasis of Fezzan*, 10*th March*, 1846.—This evening the female slaves were unusually excited in singing, and I had the curiosity to ask my negro servant, Said, what they were singing about. As many of them were natives of his own country, he had no difficulty in translating the Mandara or Bornou language. I had often asked the Moors to translate their songs for me, but got no satisfactory account from them. Said at first said, "Oh, they sing of *Rubee*" (God). "What do you mean?" I replied, impatiently. "Oh, don't you know?" he continued, "they asked God to give them their *Atka?*" (certificate of freedom). I inquired, "Is that all?" Said: "No; they say, 'Where are we going? The world is large. *O God! Where are we going? O God!*'" I inquired, "What else?" Said: "They remember their country, Bornou, and say, '*Bornou was a pleasant country, full of all good things; but this is a bad country, and we are miserable!*'" "Do they say anything else?" Said: "No; they repeat these words over and over again, and add, '*O God! give us our Atka, and let us return again to our dear home.*'"

'I am not surprised I got little satisfaction when I asked the Moors about the songs of their slaves. Who will say that the above words are not a very appropriate song? What could have been more congenially adapted to their then woful condition? It is not to be wondered at that these poor bondwomen cheer up their hearts, in their long, lonely, and painful wanderings over the desert, with words and sentiments like these; but I have often observed that their fatigue and sufferings were too great for them to strike up this melancholy dirge, and many days their plaintive strains never broke over the silence of the desert.'—*Richardson's Journal in Africa.*

WHERE are we going? where are we going,
Where are we going, Rubee?
Lord of peoples, lord of lands,
Look across these shining sands,
Through the furnace of the noon,
Through the white light of the moon.
Strong the Ghiblee wind is blowing,
Strange and large the world is growing!
Speak and tell us where we are going,
Where are we going, Rubee?

Bornou land was rich and good,
Wells of water, fields of food,
Dourra fields, and bloom of bean,
And the palm-tree cool and green:
Bornou land we see no longer,
Here we thirst and here we hunger,
Here the Moor-man smites in anger:
Where are we going, Rubee?

When we went from Bornou land,
We were like the leaves and sand,
We were many, we are few;
Life has one, and death has two:
Whitened bones our path are showing,
Thou All-seeing, thou All-knowing!
Hear us, tell us, where are we going,
Where are we going, Rubee?

Moons of marches from our eyes
Bornou land behind us lies;
Stranger round us day by day
Bends the desert circle gray;
Wild the waves of sand are flowing,
Hot the winds above them blowing,—
Lord of all things! where are we going?
Where are we going, Rubee?

We are weak, but Thou art strong;
Short our lives, but Thine is long;
We are blind, but Thou hast eyes
We are fools, but Thou art wise!
Thou, our morrow's pathway knowing
Through the strange world round us growing,
Hear us, tell us where are we going,
Where are we going, Rubee?

1847.

TO DELAWARE.

Written during the discussion in the Legislature of that State, in the winter of 1846–47, of a bill for the abolition of slavery.

THRICE welcome to thy sisters of the East,
To the strong tillers of a rugged home,
With spray-wet locks to Northern winds released,
And hardy feet o'erswept by ocean's foam;
And to the young nymphs of the golden West,
Whose harvest mantles, fringed with prairie bloom,
Trail in the sunset,—O redeemed and blest,
To the warm welcome of thy sisters come!
Broad Pennsylvania, down her sail-white bay
Shall give thee joy, and Jersey from her plains,
And the great lakes, where echo, free alway,
Moaned never shoreward with the clank of chains,
Shall weave new sun-bows in their tossing spray,
And all their waves keep grateful holiday.
And, smiling on thee through her mountain rains,
Vermont shall bless thee; and the granite peaks,
And vast Katahdin o'er his woods, shall wear
Their snow-crowns brighter in the cold, keen air;
And Massachusetts, with her rugged cheeks
O'errun with grateful tears, shall turn to thee,
When, at thy bidding, the electric wire
Shall tremble northward with its words of fire;
Glory and praise to God! another State is free!

1847.

YORKTOWN.

Dr. Thacher, surgeon in Scammel's regiment, in his description of the siege of Yorktown, says: 'The labor on the Virginia plantations is performed altogether by a species of the human race cruelly wrested from their native country, and doomed to perpetual bondage, while their masters are manfully contending for freedom and the natural rights of man. Such is the inconsistency of human nature.' Eighteen hundred slaves were found at Yorktown, after its surrender, and restored to their masters. Well was it said by Dr. Barnes, in his late work on Slavery: 'No slave was any nearer his freedom after the surrender of Yorktown than when Patrick Henry first taught the notes of liberty to echo among the hills and vales of Virginia.'

FROM Yorktown's ruins, ranked and still,
Two lines stretch far o'er vale and hill:
Who curbs his steed at head of one?
Hark! the low murmur: Washington!
Who bends his keen, approving glance,
Where down the gorgeous line of France
Shine knightly star and plume of snow?
Thou too art victor, Rochambeau!

The earth which bears this calm array
Shook with the war-charge yesterday,
Ploughed deep with hurrying hoof and wheel,
Shot-sown and bladed thick with steel;
October's clear and noonday sun
Paled in the breath-smoke of the gun,
And down night's double blackness fell,
Like a dropped star, the blazing shell.

Now all is hushed: the gleaming lines
Stand moveless as the neighboring pines;
While through them, sullen, grim, and slow,
The conquered hosts of England go:
O'Hara's brow belies his dress,
Gay Tarleton's troop rides bannerless:

Shout, from thy fired and wasted homes,
Thy scourge, Virginia, captive comes!

Nor thou alone: with one glad voice
Let all thy sister States rejoice;
Let Freedom, in whatever clime
She waits with sleepless eye her time,
Shouting from cave and mountain wood
Make glad her desert solitude,
While they who hunt her quail with fear;
The New World's chain lies broken here!

But who are they, who, cowering, wait
Within the shattered fortress gate?
Dark tillers of Virginia's soil,
Classed with the battle's common spoil,
With household stuffs, and fowl, and swine,
With Indian weed and planters' wine,
With stolen beeves, and foraged corn,—
Are they not men, Virginian born?

Oh, veil your faces, young and brave!
Sleep, Scammel, in thy soldier grave!
Sons of the Northland, ye who set
Stout hearts against the bayonet,
And pressed with steady footfall near
The moated battery's blazing tier,
Turn your scarred faces from the sight,
Let shame do homage to the right!

Lo! fourscore years have passed; and where
The Gallic bugles stirred the air,
And, through breached batteries, side by side,
To victory stormed the hosts allied,
And brave foes grounded, pale with pain,
The arms they might not lift again,
As abject as in that old day
The slave still toils his life away.

Oh, fields still green and fresh in story,
Old days of pride, old names of glory,
Old marvels of the tongue and pen,
Old thoughts which stirred the hearts of men,
Ye spared the wrong; and over all
Behold the avenging shadow fall!
Your world-wide honor stained with shame,—
Your freedom's self a hollow name!

Where's now the flag of that old war?
Where flows its stripe? Where burns its star?
Bear witness, Palo Alto's day,
Dark Vale of Palms, red Monterey,
Where Mexic Freedom, young and weak,
Fleshes the Northern eagle's beak;
Symbol of terror and despair,
Of chains and slaves, go seek it there!

Laugh, Prussia, midst thy iron ranks!
Laugh, Russia, from thy Neva's banks!
Brave sport to see the fledgling born
Of Freedom by its parent torn!
Safe now is Speilberg's dungeon cell,
Safe drear Siberia's frozen hell:
With Slavery's flag o'er both unrolled,
What of the New World fears the Old?

1847.

RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE.

[Though not published until 1847, several lines indicate that the poem was written not long after Randolph's death in 1833. In a letter published in July, 1833, Whittier says: 'In the last hour of his [Randolph's] existence, when his soul was struggling from its broken tenement, his latest effort was the confirmation of this generous act of a former period [the manumission of his slaves]. Light rest the turf upon him, beneath his patrimonial oaks! The prayers of many hearts made happy by his benevolence shall linger over his grave and bless it.']

O Mother Earth! upon thy lap
Thy weary ones receiving,
And o'er them, silent as a dream,
Thy grassy mantle weaving,
Fold softly in thy long embrace
That heart so worn and broken,
And cool its pulse of fire beneath
Thy shadows old and oaken.

Shut out from him the bitter word
And serpent hiss of scorning;
Nor let the storms of yesterday
Disturb his quiet morning.
Breathe over him forgetfulness
Of all save deeds of kindness,
And, save to smiles of grateful eyes,
Press down his lids in blindness.

There, where with living ear and eye
He heard Potomac's flowing,
And, through his tall ancestral trees,
Saw autumn's sunset glowing,
He sleeps, still looking to the west,
Beneath the dark wood shadow,
As if he still would see the sun
Sink down on wave and meadow.

Bard, Sage, and Tribune! in himself
All moods of mind contrasting,—
The tenderest wail of human woe,
The scorn like lightning blasting;
The pathos which from rival eyes
Unwilling tears could summon,
The stinging taunt, the fiery burst
Of hatred scarcely human!

Mirth, sparkling like a diamond shower,
From lips of life-long sadness;
Clear picturings of majestic thought
Upon a ground of madness;
And over all Romance and Song
A classic beauty throwing,
And laurelled Clio at his side
Her storied pages showing.

All parties feared him: each in turn
Beheld its schemes disjointed,
As right or left his fatal glance
And spectral finger pointed.
Sworn foe of Cant, he smote it down
With trenchant wit unsparing,
And, mocking, rent with ruthless hand
The robe Pretence was wearing.

Too honest or too proud to feign
A love he never cherished,
Beyond Virginia's border line
His patriotism perished.
While others hailed in distant skies
Our eagle's dusky pinion,
He only saw the mountain bird
Stoop o'er his Old Dominion!

Still through each change of fortune strange,
Racked nerve, and brain all burning,
His loving faith in Mother-land
Knew never shade of turning;
By Britain's lakes, by Neva's tide,
Whatever sky was o'er him,
He heard her rivers' rushing sound,
Her blue peaks rose before him.

He held his slaves, yet made withal
No false and vain pretences,
Nor paid a lying priest to seek
For Scriptural defences.
His harshest words of proud rebuke,
His bitterest taunt and scorning,
Fell fire-like on the Northern brow
That bent to him in fawning.

He held his slaves; yet kept the while
His reverence for the Human;
In the dark vassals of his will
He saw but Man and Woman!
No hunter of God's outraged poor
His Roanoke valley entered;
No trader in the souls of men
Across his threshold ventured.

And when the old and wearied man
Lay down for his last sleeping,
And at his side, a slave no more,
His brother-man stood weeping,
His latest thought, his latest breath,
To Freedom's duty giving,
With failing tongue and trembling hand
The dying blest the living.

Oh, never bore his ancient State
A truer son or braver!
None trampling with a calmer scorn
On foreign hate or favor.
He knew her faults, yet never stooped
His proud and manly feeling
To poor excuses of the wrong
Or meanness of concealing.

But none beheld with clearer eye
The plague-spot o'er her spreading,
None heard more sure the steps of Doom
Along her future treading.
For her as for himself he spake,
When, his gaunt frame upbracing,
He traced with dying hand 'Remorse!'
And perished in the tracing.

As from the grave where Henry sleeps,
From Vernon's weeping willow,
And from the grassy pall which hides
The Sage of Monticello,
So from the leaf-strewn burial-stone
Of Randolph's lowly dwelling,
Virginia! o'er thy land of slaves
A warning voice is swelling!

And hark! from thy deserted fields
Are sadder warnings spoken,
From quenched hearths, where thy exiled sons
Their household gods have broken.
The curse is on thee,—wolves for men,
And briers for corn-sheaves giving!
Oh, more than all thy dead renown
Were now one hero living!

1847.

THE LOST STATESMAN.

Written on hearing of the death of Silas Wright of New York. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

As they who, tossing midst the storm at night,
While turning shoreward, where a beacon shone,
Meet the walled blackness of the heaven alone,
So, on the turbulent waves of party tossed,
In gloom and tempest, men have seen thy light
Quenched in the darkness. At thy hour of noon,
While life was pleasant to thy undimmed sight,
And, day by day, within thy spirit grew
A holier hope than young Ambition knew,
As through thy rural quiet, not in vain,
Pierced the sharp thrill of Freedom's cry of pain,
Man of the millions, thou art lost too soon!
Portents at which the bravest stand aghast,—
The birth-throes of a Future, strange and vast,
Alarm the land; yet thou, so wise and strong,
Suddenly summoned to the burial bed,
Lapped in its slumbers deep and ever long,
Hear'st not the tumult surging overhead.
Who now shall rally Freedom's scattering host?
Who wear the mantle of the leader lost?
Who stay the march of slavery? He whose voice
Hath called thee from thy task-field shall not lack
Yet bolder champions, to beat bravely back
The wrong which, through His poor ones, reaches Him:
Yet firmer hands shall Freedom's torch-lights trim,
And wave them high across the abysmal black,
Till bound, dumb millions there shall see them and rejoice.

10*th mo.*, 1847.

THE SLAVES OF MARTINIQUE.

Suggested by a daguerreotype taken from a small French engraving of two negro figures, sent to the writer by Oliver Johnson.

Beams of noon, like burning lances, through the tree-tops flash and glisten,
As she stands before her lover, with raised face to look and listen.

Dark, but comely, like the maiden in the ancient Jewish song:
Scarcely has the toil of task-fields done her graceful beauty wrong.

He, the strong one and the manly, with the vassal's garb and hue,
Holding still his spirit's birthright, to his higher nature true;

Hiding deep the strengthening purpose of a freeman in his heart,
As the gregree holds his Fetich from the white man's gaze apart.

Ever foremost of his comrades, when the driver's morning horn
Calls away to stifling mill-house, to the fields of cane and corn:

Fall the keen and burning lashes never on his back or limb;
Scarce with look or word of censure, turns the driver unto him.

Yet, his brow is always thoughtful, and his eye is hard and stern;
Slavery's last and humblest lesson he has never deigned to learn.

And, at evening, when his comrades dance before their master's door,
Folding arms and knitting forehead, stands he silent evermore.

God be praised for every instinct which rebels against a lot
Where the brute survives the human, and man's upright form is not!

As the serpent-like bejuco winds his spiral fold on fold
Round the tall and stately ceiba, till it withers in his hold;

Slow decays the forest monarch, closer girds the fell embrace,
Till the tree is seen no longer, and the vine is in its place;

So a base and bestial nature round the vassal's manhood twines,
And the spirit wastes beneath it, like the ceiba choked with vines.

God is Love, saith the Evangel; and our world of woe and sin
Is made light and happy only when a Love is shining in.

Ye whose lives are free as sunshine, finding, wheresoe'er ye roam,
Smiles of welcome, looks of kindness, making all the world like home;

In the veins of whose affections kindred blood is but a part,
Of one kindly current throbbing from the universal heart;

Can ye know the deeper meaning of a love in Slavery nursed,
Last flower of a lost Eden, blooming in that Soil accursed?

Love of Home, and Love of Woman!—dear to all, but doubly dear
To the heart whose pulses elsewhere measure only hate and fear.

All around the desert circles, underneath a brazen sky,
Only one green spot remaining where the dew is never dry!

From the horror of that desert, from its atmosphere of hell,
Turns the fainting spirit thither, as the diver seeks his bell.

'Tis the fervid tropic noontime; faint and low the sea-waves beat;
Hazy rise the inland mountains through the glimmer of the heat,—

Where, through mingled leaves and blossoms, arrowy sunbeams flash and glisten,
Speaks her lover to the slave-girl, and she lifts her head to listen:—

'We shall live as slaves no longer! Freedom's hour is close at hand!
Rocks her bark upon the waters, rests the boat upon the strand!

'I have seen the Haytien Captain; I have seen his swarthy crew,
Haters of the pallid faces, to their race and color true.

'They have sworn to wait our coming till the night has passed its noon,
And the gray and darkening waters roll above the sunken moon!'

Oh, the blessed hope of freedom! how with joy and glad surprise,
For an instant throbs her bosom, for an instant beam her eyes!

But she looks across the valley, where her mother's hut is seen,
Through the snowy bloom of coffee, and the lemon-leaves so green.

And she answers, sad and earnest: 'It were wrong for thee to stay;
God hath heard thy prayer for freedom, and His finger points the way.

'Well I know with what endurance, for the sake of me and mine,
Thou hast borne too long a burden never meant for souls like thine.

'Go; and at the hour of midnight, when
our last farewell is o'er,
Kneeling on our place of parting, I will
bless thee from the shore.

'But for me, my mother, lying on her
sick-bed all the day,
Lifts her weary head to watch me, coming
through the twilight gray.

'Should I leave her sick and helpless,
even freedom, shared with thee,
Would be sadder far than bondage, lonely
toil, and stripes to me.

'For my heart would die within me, and
my brain would soon be wild;
I should hear my mother calling through
the twilight for her child!'

Blazing upward from the ocean, shines
the sun of morning-time,
Through the coffee-trees in blossom, and
green hedges of the lime.

Side by side, amidst the slave-gang, toil
the lover and the maid;
Wherefore looks he o'er the waters, leaning
forward on his spade?

Sadly looks he, deeply sighs he: 'tis the
Haytien's sail he sees,
Like a white cloud of the mountains,
driven seaward by the breeze!

But his arm a light hand presses, and he
hears a low voice call:
Hate of Slavery, hope of Freedom, Love
is mightier than all.

1848.

THE CURSE OF THE CHARTER-BREAKERS.

The rights and liberties affirmed by Magna Charta were deemed of such importance, in the thirteenth century, that the Bishops, twice a year, with tapers burning, and in their pontifical robes, pronounced, in the presence of the king and the representatives of the estates of England, the greater excommunication against the infringer of that instrument. The imposing ceremony took place in the great Hall of Westminster. A copy of the curse, as pronounced in 1253, declares that, 'by the authority of Almighty God, and the blessed Apostles and Martyrs, and all the saints in heaven, all those who violate the English liberties, and secretly or openly, by deed, word, or counsel, do make statutes, *or observe them being made*, against said liberties, are accursed and sequestered from the company of heaven and the sacraments of the Holy Church.'

William Penn, in his admirable political pamphlet, *England's Present Interest Considered*, alluding to the curse of the Charter-breakers, says: 'I am no Roman Catholic, and little value their other curses; yet I declare I would not for the world incur this curse, as every man deservedly doth, who offers violence to the fundamental freedom thereby repeated and confirmed.'

In Westminster's royal halls,
Robed in their pontificals,
England's ancient prelates stood
For the people's right and good.

Closed around the waiting crowd,
Dark and still, like winter's cloud;
King and council, lord and knight,
Squire and yeoman, stood in sight;

Stood to hear the priest rehearse,
In God's name, the Church's curse,
By the tapers round them lit,
Slowly, sternly uttering it.

'Right of voice in framing laws,
Right of peers to try each cause;
Peasant homestead, mean and small,
Sacred as the monarch's hall,—

'Whoso lays his hand on these,
England's ancient liberties;
Whoso breaks, by word or deed,
England's vow at Runnymede;

'Be he Prince or belted knight,
Whatsoe'er his rank or might,
If the highest, then the worst,
Let him live and die accursed.

'Thou, who to Thy Church hast given
Keys alike of hell and heaven,
Make our word and witness sure,
Let the curse we speak endure!'

Silent, while that curse was said,
Every bare and listening head
Bowed in reverent awe, and then
All the people said, Amen!

Seven times the bells have tolled,
For the centuries gray and old,
Since that stoled and mitred band
Cursed the tyrants of their land.

Since the priesthood, like a tower,
Stood between the poor and power;
And the wronged and trodden down
Blessed the abbot's shaven crown.

Gone, thank God, their wizard spell,
Lost, their keys of heaven and hell;
Yet I sigh for men as bold
As those bearded priests of old.

Now too oft the priesthood wait
At the threshold of the state;
Waiting for the beck and nod
Of its power as law and God.

Fraud exults, while solemn words
Sanctify his stolen hoards;
Slavery laughs, while ghostly lips
Bless his manacles and whips.

Not on them the poor rely,
Not to them looks liberty,
Who with fawning falsehood cower
To the wrong, when clothed with power.

Oh, to see them meanly cling,
Round the master, round the king,
Sported with, and sold and bought,—
Pitifuller sight is not!

Tell me not that this must be:
God's true priest is always free;
Free, the needed truth to speak,
Right the wronged, and raise the weak.

Not to fawn on wealth and state,
Leaving Lazarus at the gate;
Not to peddle creeds like wares;
Not to mutter hireling prayers;

Nor to paint the new life's bliss
On the sable ground of this;
Golden streets for idle knave,
Sabbath rest for weary slave!

Not for words and works like these,
Priest of God, thy mission is;
But to make earth's desert glad,
In its Eden greenness clad;

And to level manhood bring
Lord and peasant, serf and king;
And the Christ of God to find
In the humblest of thy kind!

Thine to work as well as pray,
Clearing thorny wrongs away;
Plucking up the weeds of sin,
Letting heaven's warm sunshine in;

Watching on the hills of Faith;
Listening what the spirit saith,
Of the dim-seen light afar,
Growing like a nearing star.

God's interpreter art thou,
To the waiting ones below;
'Twixt them and its light midway
Heralding the better day;

Catching gleams of temple spires,
Hearing notes of angel choirs,
Where, as yet unseen of them,
Comes the New Jerusalem!

Like the seer of Patmos gazing,
On the glory downward blazing;
Till upon Earth's grateful sod
Rests the City of our God!

1848.

PÆAN.

This poem indicates the exultation of the anti-slavery party, in view of the revolt of the friends of Martin Van Buren in New York from the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1848.

Now, joy and thanks forevermore!
The dreary night has wellnigh passed,
The slumbers of the North are o'er,
The Giant stands erect at last!

More than we hoped in that dark time
When, faint with watching, few and worn,
We saw no welcome day-star climb
The cold gray pathway of the morn!

O weary hours! O night of years!
What storms our darkling pathway swept,
Where, beating back our thronging fears,
By Faith alone our march we kept.

How jeered the scoffing crowd behind,
How mocked before the tyrant train,
As, one by one, the true and kind
Fell fainting in our path of pain!

They died, their brave hearts breaking slow,
But, self-forgetful to the last,
In words of cheer and bugle blow
Their breath upon the darkness passed.

A mighty host, on either hand,
Stood waiting for the dawn of day
To crush like reeds our feeble band;
The morn has come, and where are they?

Troop after troop their line forsakes;
With peace-white banners waving free,
And from our own the glad shout breaks,
Of Freedom and Fraternity!

Like mist before the growing light,
The hostile cohorts melt away;
Our frowning foemen of the night
Are brothers at the dawn of day!

As unto these repentant ones
We open wide our toil-worn ranks,
Along our line a murmur runs
Of song, and praise, and grateful thanks.

Sound for the onset! Blast on blast!
Till Slavery's minions cower and quail;
One charge of fire shall drive them fast
Like chaff before our Northern gale!

O prisoners in your house of pain,
Dumb, toiling millions, bound and sold,
Look! stretched o'er Southern vale and plain,
The Lord's delivering hand behold!

Above the tyrant's pride of power,
His iron gates and guarded wall,
The bolts which shattered Shinar's tower
Hang, smoking, for a fiercer fall.

Awake! awake! my Fatherland!
It is thy Northern light that shines;
This stirring march of Freedom's band
The storm-song of thy mountain pines.

Wake, dwellers where the day expires!
And hear, in winds that sweep your lakes
And fan your prairies' roaring fires,
The signal-call that Freedom makes!

1848.

THE CRISIS.

Written on learning the terms of the treaty with Mexico.

Across the Stony Mountains, o'er the desert's drouth and sand,
The circles of our empire touch the western ocean's strand;
From slumberous Timpanogos, to Gila, wild and free,
Flowing down from Nuevo-Leon to California's sea;
And from the mountains of the east, to Santa Rosa's shore,
The eagles of Mexitli shall beat the air no more.

O Vale of Rio Bravo! Let thy simple children weep;
Close watch about their holy fire let maids of Pecos keep;
Let Taos send her cry across Sierra Madre's pines,
And Santa Barbara toll her bells amidst her corn and vines;
For lo! the pale land-seekers come, with eager eyes of gain,
Wide scattering, like the bison herds on broad Salada's plain.

Let Sacramento's herdsmen heed what sound the winds bring down
Of footsteps on the crisping snow, from cold Nevada's crown!
Full hot and fast the Saxon rides, with rein of travel slack,
And, bending o'er his saddle, leaves the sunrise at his back;
By many a lonely river, and gorge of fir and pine,
On many a wintry hill-top, his nightly camp-fires shine.

O countrymen and brothers! that land of lake and plain,
Of salt wastes alternating with valleys fat with grain;
Of mountains white with winter, looking downward, cold, serene,
On their feet with spring-vines tangled and lapped in softest green;
Swift through whose black volcanic gates, o'er many a sunny vale,
Wind-like the Arapahoe sweeps the bison's dusty trail!

Great spaces yet untravelled, great lakes whose mystic shores
The Saxon rifle never heard, nor dip of Saxon oars;
Great herds that wander all unwatched, wild steeds that none have tamed,
Strange fish in unknown streams, and birds the Saxon never named;
Deep mines, dark mountain crucibles, where Nature's chemic powers
Work out the Great Designer's will; all all these ye say are ours!

Forever ours! for good or ill, on us the burden lies:
God's balance, watched by angels, is hung across the skies.
Shall Justice, Truth, and Freedom turn the poised and trembling scale?
Or shall the Evil triumph, and robber Wrong prevail?
Shall the broad land o'er which our flag in starry splendor waves,
Forego through us its freedom, and bear the tread of slaves?

The day is breaking in the East of which the prophets told,
And brightens up the sky of Time the Christian Age of Gold;
Old Might to Right is yielding, battle blade to clerkly pen,
Earth's monarchs are her peoples, and her serfs stand up as men;
The isles rejoice together, in a day are nations born,
And the slave walks free in Tunis, and by Stamboul's Golden Horn!

Is this, O countrymen of mine! a day for us to sow
The soil of new-gained empire with slavery's seeds of woe?
To feed with our fresh life-blood the Old World's cast-off crime,
Dropped, like some monstrous early birth, from the tired lap of Time?
To run anew the evil race the old lost nations ran,
And die like them of unbelief of God, and wrong of man?

Great Heaven! Is this our mission? End in this the prayers and tears,
The toil, the strife, the watchings of our younger, better years?
Still as the Old World rolls in light, shall ours in shadow turn,
A beamless Chaos, cursed of God, through outer darkness borne?
Where the far nations looked for light, a blackness in the air?
Where for words of hope they listened, the long wail of despair?

The Crisis presses on us; face to face with us it stands,
With solemn lips of question, like the Sphinx in Egypt's sands!
This day we fashion Destiny, our web of Fate we spin;
This day for all hereafter choose we holiness or sin;
Even now from starry Gerizim, or Ebal's cloudy crown,
We call the dews of blessing or the bolts of cursing down!

By all for which the martyrs bore their agony and shame;
By all the warning words of truth with which the prophets came;
By the Future which awaits us; by all the hopes which cast
Their faint and trembling beams across the blackness of the Past;
And by the blessed thought of Him who for Earth's freedom died,
O my people! O my brothers! let us choose the righteous side.

So shall the Northern pioneer go joyful on his way;
To wed Penobscot's waters to San Francisco's bay;
To make the rugged places smooth, and sow the vales with grain;
And bear, with Liberty and Law, the Bible in his train:
The mighty West shall bless the East, and sea shall answer sea,
And mountain unto mountain call, Praise God, for we are free!

1848.

LINES ON THE PORTRAIT OF A CELEBRATED PUBLISHER.

The lines following were addressed to a magazine publisher, who, alarmed for his Southern circulation, not only dropped the name of Grace Greenwood from his list of contributors, but made an offensive parade of his action, with the view of strengthening his position among slaveholders and conservatives. By some coincidence his portrait was issued about the same time.

A MOONY breadth of virgin face,
By thought unviolated;
A patient mouth, to take from scorn
The hook with bank-notes baited!
Its self-complacent sleekness shows
How thrift goes with the fawner;
An unctuous unconcern of all
Which nice folks call dishonor!

A pleasant print to peddle out
In lands of rice and cotton;
The model of that face in dough
Would make the artist's fortune.
For Fame to thee has come unsought,
While others vainly woo her,
In proof how mean a thing can make
A great man of its doer.

To whom shall men thyself compare,
Since common models fail 'em,
Save classic goose of ancient Rome,
Or sacred ass of Balaam?
The gabble of that wakeful goose
Saved Rome from sack of Brennus;
The braying of the prophet's ass
Betrayed the angel's menace!

So when Guy Fawkes, in petticoats,
And azure-tinted hose on,
Was twisting from thy love-lorn sheets
The slow-match of explosion—
An earthquake blast that would have tossed
The Union as a feather,
Thy instinct saved a perilled land
And perilled purse together.

Just think of Carolina's sage
Sent whirling like a Dervis,
Of Quattlebum in middle air
Performing strange drill-service!
Doomed like Assyria's lord of old,
Who fell before the Jewess,
Or sad Abimelech, to sigh,
'Alas! a woman slew us!'

Thou saw'st beneath a fair disguise
The danger darkly lurking,
And maiden bodice dreaded more
Than warrior's steel-wrought jerkin.
How keen to scent the hidden plot!
How prompt wert thou to balk it,
With patriot zeal and pedler thrift,
For country and for pocket!

Thy likeness here is doubtless well,
But higher honor's due it;
On auction-block and negro-jail
Admiring eyes should view it.
Or, hung aloft, it well might grace
The nation's senate-chamber—
A greedy Northern bottle-fly
Preserved in Slavery's amber!

1850.

DERNE.

The storming of the city of Derne, in 1805, by General Eaton, at the head of nine Americans, forty Greeks, and a motley array of Turks and Arabs, was one of those feats of hardihood and daring which have in all ages attracted the admiration of the multitude. The higher and holier heroism of Christian self-denial and sacrifice, in the humble walks of private duty, is seldom so well appreciated.

NIGHT on the city of the Moor!
On mosque and tomb, and white-walled shore,

On sea-waves, to whose ceaseless knock
The narrow harbor-gates unlock,
On corsair's galley, carack tall,
And plundered Christian caraval!
The sounds of Moslem life are still;
No mule-bell tinkles down the hill;
Stretched in the broad court of the khan,
The dusty Bornou caravan
Lies heaped in slumber, beast and man;
The Sheik is dreaming in his tent,
His noisy Arab tongue o'erspent;
The kiosk's glimmering lights are gone,
The merchant with his wares withdrawn;
Rough pillowed on some pirate breast,
The dancing-girl has sunk to rest;
And, save where measured footsteps fall
Along the Bashaw's guarded wall,
Or where, like some bad dream, the Jew
Creeps stealthily his quarter through,
Or counts with fear his golden heaps,
The City of the Corsair sleeps!

But where yon prison long and low
Stands black against the pale star-glow,
Chafed by the ceaseless wash of waves,
There watch and pine the Christian slaves;
Rough-bearded men, whose far-off wives
Wear out with grief their lonely lives;
And youth, still flashing from his eyes
The clear blue of New England skies,
A treasured lock of whose soft hair
Now wakes some sorrowing mother's prayer;
Or, worn upon some maiden breast,
Stirs with the loving heart's unrest!

A bitter cup each life must drain,
The groaning earth is cursed with pain,
And, like the scroll the angel bore
The shuddering Hebrew seer before,
O'erwrit alike, without, within,
With all the woes which follow sin;
But, bitterest of the ills beneath
Whose load man totters down to death,
Is that which plucks the regal crown
Of Freedom from his forehead down,
And snatches from his powerless hand
The sceptred sign of self-command,
Effacing with the chain and rod
The image and the seal of God;
Till from his nature, day by day,
The manly virtues fall away,
And leave him naked, blind and mute,
The godlike merging in the brute!

Why mourn the quiet ones who die
Beneath affection's tender eye,
Unto their household and their kin
Like ripened corn-sheaves gathered in?
O weeper, from that tranquil sod,
That holy harvest-home of God,
Turn to the quick and suffering, shed
Thy tears upon the living dead!
Thank God above thy dear ones' graves,
They sleep with Him, they are not slaves.

What dark mass, down the mountain-sides
Swift-pouring, like a stream divides?
A long, loose, straggling caravan,
Camel and horse and armëd man.
The moon's low crescent, glimmering o'er
Its grave of waters to the shore,
Lights up that mountain cavalcade,
And gleams from gun and spear and blade
Near and more near! now o'er them falls
The shadow of the city walls.
Hark to the sentry's challenge, drowned
In the fierce trumpet's charging sound!
The rush of men, the musket's peal,
The short, sharp clang of meeting steel!

Vain, Moslem, vain thy lifeblood poured
So freely on thy foeman's sword!
Not to the swift nor to the strong
The battles of the right belong;
For he who strikes for Freedom wears
The armor of the captive's prayers,
And Nature proffers to his cause
The strength of her eternal laws;
While he whose arm essays to bind
And herd with common brutes his kind
Strives evermore at fearful odds
With Nature and the jealous gods,
And dares the dread recoil which late
Or soon their right shall vindicate.

'T is done, the hornëd crescent falls!
The star-flag flouts the broken walls!
Joy to the captive husband! joy
To thy sick heart, O brown-locked boy!
In sullen wrath the conquered Moor
Wide open flings your dungeon-door,

And leaves ye free from cell and chain,
The owners of yourselves again.
Dark as his allies desert-born,
Soiled with the battle's stain, and worn
With the long marches of his band
Through hottest wastes of rock and sand,
Scorched by the sun and furnace-breath
Of the red desert's wind of death,
With welcome words and grasping hands,
The victor and deliverer stands!

The tale is one of distant skies;
The dust of half a century lies
Upon it; yet its hero's name
Still lingers on the lips of Fame.
Men speak the praise of him who gave
Deliverance to the Moorman's slave,
Yet dare to brand with shame and crime
The heroes of our land and time,—
The self-forgetful ones, who stake
Home, name, and life for Freedom's sake.
God mend his heart who cannot feel
The impulse of a holy zeal,
And sees not, with his sordid eyes,
The beauty of self-sacrifice!
Though in the sacred place he stands,
Uplifting consecrated hands,
Unworthy are his lips to tell
Of Jesus' martyr-miracle,
Or name aright that dread embrace
Of suffering for a fallen race!

1850.

A SABBATH SCENE.

This poem finds its justification in the readiness with which, even in the North, clergymen urged the prompt execution of the Fugitive Slave Law as a Christian duty, and defended the system of slavery as a Bible institution.

Scarce had the solemn Sabbath-bell
Ceased quivering in the steeple,
Scarce had the parson to his desk
Walked stately through his people,

When down the summer-shaded street
A wasted female figure,
With dusky brow and naked feet,
Came rushing wild and eager.

She saw the white spire through the trees,
She heard the sweet hymn swelling:
O pitying Christ! a refuge give
That poor one in Thy dwelling!

Like a scared fawn before the hounds,
Right up the aisle she glided,
While close behind her, whip in hand,
A lank-haired hunter strided.

She raised a keen and bitter cry,
To Heaven and Earth appealing;
Were manhood's generous pulses dead?
Had woman's heart no feeling?

A score of stout hands rose between
The hunter and the flying:
Age clenched his staff, and maiden eyes
Flashed tearful, yet defying.

'Who dares profane this house and day?'
Cried out the angry pastor.
'Why, bless your soul, the wench's a slave,
And I'm her lord and master!

'I've law and gospel on my side,
And who shall dare refuse me?'
Down came the parson, bowing low,
'My good sir, pray excuse me!

'Of course I know your right divine
To own and work and whip her;
Quick, deacon, throw that Polyglott
Before the wench, and trip her!'

Plump dropped the holy tome, and o'er
Its sacred pages stumbling,
Bound hand and foot, a slave once more,
The hapless wretch lay trembling.

I saw the parson tie the knots,
The while his flock addressing,
The Scriptural claims of slavery
With text on text impressing.

'Although,' said he, 'on Sabbath day
All secular occupations
Are deadly sins, we must fulfil
Our moral obligations:

'And this commends itself as one
To every conscience tender;
As Paul sent back Onesimus,
My Christian friends, we send her!'

Shriek rose on shriek,—the Sabbath air
Her wild cries tore asunder;
I listened, with hushed breath, to hear
God answering with His thunder!

All still! the very altar's cloth
Had smothered down her shrieking,
And, dumb, she turned from face to face,
For human pity seeking!

I saw her dragged along the aisle,
Her shackles harshly clanking;
I heard the parson, over all,
The Lord devoutly thanking!

My brain took fire: 'Is this,' I cried,
'The end of prayer and preaching?
Then down with pulpit, down with priest,
And give us Nature's teaching!

'Foul shame and scorn be on ye all
Who turn the good to evil,
And steal the Bible from the Lord,
To give it to the Devil!

'Than garbled text or parchment law
I own a statute higher;
And God is true, though every book
And every man's a liar!'

Just then I felt the deacon's hand
In wrath my coat-tail seize on;
I heard the priest cry, 'Infidel!'
The lawyer mutter, 'Treason!'

I started up,—where now were church,
Slave, master, priest, and people?
I only heard the supper-bell,
Instead of clanging steeple.

But, on the open window's sill,
O'er which the white blooms drifted,
The pages of a good old Book
The wind of summer lifted,

And flower and vine, like angel wings
Around the Holy Mother,
Waved softly there, as if God's truth
And Mercy kissed each other.

And freely from the cherry-bough
Above the casement swinging,
With golden bosom to the sun,
The oriole was singing.

As bird and flower made plain of old
The lesson of the Teacher,
So now I heard the written Word
Interpreted by Nature!

For to my ear methought the breeze
Bore Freedom's blessed word on;
Thus saith the Lord: Break every yoke,
Undo the heavy burden!

1850.

IN THE EVIL DAYS.

This and the four following poems have special reference to that darkest hour in the aggression of slavery which preceded the dawn of a better day, when the conscience of the people was roused to action. [Originally entitled *Stanzas for the Times*, 1850.]

The evil days have come, the poor
Are made a prey;
Bar up the hospitable door,
Put out the fire-lights, point no more
The wanderer's way.

For Pity now is crime; the chain
Which binds our States
Is melted at her hearth in twain,
Is rusted by her tears' soft rain:
Close up her gates.

Our Union, like a glacier stirred
By voice below,
Or bell of kine, or wing of bird,
A beggar's crust, a kindly word
May overthrow!

Poor, whispering tremblers! yet we boast
Our blood and name;
Bursting its century-bolted frost,
Each gray cairn on the Northman's coast
Cries out for shame!

Oh for the open firmament,
The prairie free,
The desert hillside, cavern-rent,
The Pawnee's lodge, the Arab's tent,
The Bushman's tree!

Than web of Persian loom most rare,
Or soft divan,
Better the rough rock, bleak and bare,
Or hollow tree, which man may share
With suffering man.

I hear a voice: 'Thus saith the Law,
Let Love be dumb;
Clasping her liberal hands in awe,
Let sweet-lipped Charity withdraw
From hearth and home.'

I hear another voice: 'The poor
Are thine to feed;
Turn not the outcast from thy door,
Nor give to bonds and wrong once more
Whom God hath freed.'

Dear Lord! between that law and Thee
No choice remains;
Yet not untrue to man's decree,
Though spurning its rewards, is he
Who bears its pains.

Not mine Sedition's trumpet-blast
And threatening word;
I read the lesson of the Past,
That firm endurance wins at last
More than the sword.

O clear-eyed Faith, and Patience thou
So calm and strong!
Lend strength to weakness, teach us how
The sleepless eyes of God look through
This night of wrong!

1850.

MOLOCH IN STATE STREET.

In a foot-note of the Report of the Senate of Massachusetts on the case of the arrest and return to bondage of the fugitive slave Thomas Sims it is stated that—

'It would have been impossible for the U. S. marshal thus successfully to have resisted the law of the State, without the assistance of the municipal authorities of Boston and the countenance and support of a numerous, wealthy, and powerful body of citizens. It was in evidence that 1500 of the most wealthy and respectable citizens—merchants, bankers, and others—volunteered their services to aid the marshal on this occasion. . . . No watch was kept upon the doings of the marshal, and while the State officers slept, after the moon had gone down, in the darkest hour before daybreak, the accused was taken out of our jurisdiction by the armed police of the city of Boston.'

The moon has set: while yet the dawn
Breaks cold and gray,
Between the midnight and the morn
Bear off your prey!

On, swift and still! the conscious street
Is panged and stirred;
Tread light! that fall of serried feet
The dead have heard!

The first drawn blood of Freedom's veins
Gushed where ye tread;
Lo! through the dusk the martyr-stains
Blush darkly red!

Beneath the slowly waning stars
And whitening day,
What stern and awful presence bars
That sacred way?

What faces frown upon ye, dark
With shame and pain?
Come these from Plymouth's Pilgrim bark?
Is that young Vane?

Who, dimly beckoning, speed ye on
With mocking cheer?
Lo! spectral Andros, Hutchinson,
And Gage are here!

For ready mart or favoring blast
Through Moloch's fire,
Flesh of his flesh, unsparing, passed
The Tyrian sire.

Ye make that ancient sacrifice
Of Man to Gain,
Your traffic thrives, where Freedom dies,
Beneath the chain.

Ye sow to-day; your harvest, scorn
And hate, is near;
How think ye freemen, mountain-born,
The tale will hear?

Thank God! our mother State can yet
Her fame retrieve;
To you and to your children let
The scandal cleave.

Chain Hall and Pulpit, Court and Press,
Make gods of gold;
Let honor, truth, and manliness
Like wares be sold.

Your hoards are great, your walls are strong,
But God is just;
The gilded chambers built by wrong
Invite the rust.

What! know ye not the gains of Crime
Are dust and dross;
Its ventures on the waves of time
Foredoomed to loss!

And still the Pilgrim State remains
What she hath been;
Her inland hills, her seaward plains,
Still nurture men!

Nor wholly lost the fallen mart;
Her olden blood
Through many a free and generous heart
Still pours its flood.

That brave old blood, quick-flowing yet,
Shall know no check,
Till a free people's foot is set
On Slavery's neck.

Even now, the peal of bell and gun,
And hills aflame,
Tell of the first great triumph won
[58] In Freedom's name.

The long night dies: the welcome gray
Of dawn we see;
Speed up the heavens Thy perfect day,
God of the free!

1851.

OFFICIAL PIETY.

Suggested by reading a state paper, wherein the higher law is invoked to sustain the lower one. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

A PIOUS magistrate! sound his praise throughout
The wondering churches. Who shall henceforth doubt
That the long-wished millennium draweth nigh?
Sin in high places has become devout,
Tithes mint, goes painful-faced, and prays its lie
Straight up to Heaven, and calls it piety!

The pirate, watching from his bloody deck
The weltering galleon, heavy with the gold
Of Acapulco, holding death in check
While prayers are said, brows crossed, and beads are told;
The robber, kneeling where the wayside cross
On dark Abruzzo tells of life's dread loss
From his own carbine, glancing still abroad
For some new victim, offering thanks to God!
Rome, listening at her altars to the cry
Of midnight Murder, while her hounds of hell
Scour France, from baptized cannon and holy bell
And thousand-throated priesthood, loud and high,
Pealing Te Deums to the shuddering sky,
'Thanks to the Lord, who giveth victory!'
What prove these, but that crime was ne'er so black
As ghostly cheer and pious thanks to lack?
Satan is modest. At Heaven's door he lays

His evil offspring, and, in Scriptural phrase
And saintly posture, gives to God the praise
And honor of the monstrous progeny.
What marvel, then, in our own time to see
His old devices, smoothly acted o'er,—
Official piety, locking fast the door
Of Hope against three million souls of men,—
Brothers, God's children, Christ's redeemed,—and then,
With uprolled eyeballs and on bended knee,
Whining a prayer for help to hide the key!

1853.

THE RENDITION.

On the 2d of June, 1854, Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave from Virginia, after being under arrest for ten days in the Boston Court House, was remanded to slavery under the Fugitive Slave Act, and taken down State Street to a steamer chartered by the United States Government, under guard of United States troops and artillery, Massachusetts militia and Boston police. Public excitement ran high, a futile attempt to rescue Burns having been made during his confinement, and the streets were crowded with tens of thousands of people, of whom many came from other towns and cities of the State to witness the humiliating spectacle.

I HEARD the train's shrill whistle call,
I saw an earnest look beseech,
And rather by that look than speech
My neighbor told me all.

And, as I thought of Liberty
Marched handcuffed down that sworded street,
The solid earth beneath my feet
Reeled fluid as the sea.

I felt a sense of bitter loss,—
Shame, tearless grief, and stifling wrath,
And loathing fear, as if my path
A serpent stretched across.

All love of home, all pride of place,
All generous confidence and trust,
Sank smothering in that deep disgust
And anguish of disgrace.

Down on my native hills of June,
And home's green quiet, hiding all,
Fell sudden darkness like the fall
Of midnight upon noon!

And Law, an unloosed maniac, strong,
Blood-drunken, through the blackness trod,
Hoarse-shouting in the ear of God
The blasphemy of wrong.

'O Mother, from thy memories proud,
Thy old renown, dear Commonwealth,
Lend this dead air a breeze of health,
And smite with stars this cloud.

'Mother of Freedom, wise and brave,
Rise awful in thy strength,' I said;
Ah me! I spake but to the dead;
I stood upon her grave!

6th mo., 1854.

ARISEN AT LAST.

On the passage of the bill to protect the rights and liberties of the people of the State against the Fugitive Slave Act. [Originally entitled simply *Lines.*]

I SAID I stood upon thy grave,
My Mother State, when last the moon
Of blossoms clomb the skies of June.

And, scattering ashes on my head,
I wore, undreaming of relief,
The sackcloth of thy shame and grief.

Again that moon of blossoms shines
On leaf and flower and folded wing,
And thou hast risen with the spring!

Once more thy strong maternal arms
Are round about thy children flung,—
A lioness that guards her young!

No threat is on thy closëd lips,
But in thine eye a power to smite
The mad wolf backward from its light.

Southward the baffled robber's track
Henceforth runs only; hereaway,
The fell lycanthrope finds no prey.

Henceforth, within thy sacred gates,
His first low howl shall downward draw
The thunder of thy righteous law.

Not mindless of thy trade and gain,
But, acting on the wiser plan,
Thou 'rt grown conservative of man.

So shalt thou clothe with life the hope,
Dream-painted on the sightless eyes
Of him who sang of Paradise,—

The vision of a Christian man,
In virtue, as in stature great
Embodied in a Christian State.

And thou, amidst thy sisterhood
Forbearing long, yet standing fast,
Shalt win their grateful thanks at last;

When North and South shall strive no more,
And all their feuds and fears be lost
In Freedom's holy Pentecost.

6th mo., 1855.

THE HASCHISH.

Of all that Orient lands can vaunt
Of marvels with our own competing,
The strangest is the Haschish plant,
And what will follow on its eating.

What pictures to the taster rise,
Of Dervish or of Almeh dances!
Of Eblis, or of Paradise,
Set all aglow with Houri glances!

The poppy visions of Cathay,
The heavy beer-trance of the Suabian;
The wizard lights and demon play
Of nights Walpurgis and Arabian!

The Mollah and the Christian dog
Change place in mad metempsychosis;
The Muezzin climbs the synagogue,
The Rabbi shakes his beard at Moses!

The Arab by his desert well
Sits choosing from some Caliph's daughters,
And hears his single camel's bell
Sound welcome to his regal quarters.

The Koran's reader makes complaint
Of Shitan dancing on and off it;
The robber offers alms, the saint
Drinks Tokay and blasphemes the Prophet.

Such scenes that Eastern plant awakes;
But we have one ordained to beat it,
The Haschish of the West, which makes
Or fools or knaves of all who eat it.

The preacher eats, and straight appears
His Bible in a new translation;
Its angels negro overseers,
And Heaven itself a snug plantation!

The man of peace, about whose dreams
The sweet millennial angels cluster,
Tastes the mad weed, and plots and schemes,
A raving Cuban filibuster!

The noisiest Democrat, with ease,
It turns to Slavery's parish beadle;
The shrewdest statesman eats and sees
Due southward point the polar needle.

The Judge partakes, and sits erelong
Upon his bench a railing blackguard;
Decides off-hand that right is wrong,
And reads the ten commandments backward.

O potent plant! so rare a taste
Has never Turk or Gentoo gotten;
The hempen Haschish of the East
Is powerless to our Western Cotton!

1854.

THE KANSAS EMIGRANTS.

This poem and the three following were called out by the popular movement of Free State men to occupy the territory of Kansas, and by the use of the great democratic weapon—an overpowering majority—to settle the conflict on that ground between Freedom and Slavery. The opponents

of the movement used another kind of weapon. [This song was sent to the first company of emigrants by the poet. 'It is one of those prophecies,' says E. E. Hale, 'for which poets are born, uttered before the event and not after. In absolute hard fact, the song was sung by parties of emigrants, sung when they started, sung as they rode, and sung in the new home.']

We cross the prairie as of old
The pilgrims crossed the sea,
To make the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free!

We go to rear a wall of men
On Freedom's southern line,
And plant beside the cotton-tree
The rugged Northern pine!

We're flowing from our native hills
As our free rivers flow:
The blessing of our Mother-land
Is on us as we go.

We go to plant her common schools
On distant prairie swells,
And give the Sabbaths of the wild
The music of her bells.

Upbearing, like the Ark of old,
The Bible in our van,
We go to test the truth of God
Against the fraud of man.

No pause, nor rest, save where the streams
That feed the Kansas run,
Save where our Pilgrim gonfalon
Shall flout the setting sun!

We'll tread the prairie as of old
Our fathers sailed the sea,
And make the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free!

1854.

FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE.

Inscribed to friends under arrest for treason against the slave power. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

The age is dull and mean. Men creep,
Not walk; with blood too pale and tame
To pay the debt they owe to shame;
Buy cheap, sell dear; eat, drink, and sleep
Down-pillowed, deaf to moaning want;
Pay tithes for soul-insurance; keep
Six days to Mammon, one to Cant.

In such a time, give thanks to God,
That somewhat of the holy rage
With which the prophets in their age
On all its decent seemings trod,
Has set your feet upon the lie,
That man and ox and soul and clod
Are market stock to sell and buy!

The hot words from your lips, my own,
To caution trained, might not repeat;
But if some tares among the wheat
Of generous thought and deed were sown,
No common wrong provoked your zeal;
The silken gauntlet that is thrown
In such a quarrel rings like steel.

The brave old strife the fathers saw
For Freedom calls for men again
Like those who battled not in vain
For England's Charter, Alfred's law;
And right of speech and trial just
Wage in your name their ancient war
With venal courts and perjured trust.

God's ways seem dark, but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day;
The evil cannot brook delay,
The good can well afford to wait.
Give ermined knaves their hour of crime;
Ye have the future grand and great,
The safe appeal of Truth to Time!

1855.

LETTER

FROM A MISSIONARY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOUTH, IN KANSAS, TO A DISTINGUISHED POLITICIAN.

Douglas Mission, *August*, 1854.

Last week—the Lord be praised for all
His mercies
To His unworthy servant!—I arrived
Safe at the Mission, *via* Westport; where

I tarried over night, to aid in forming
A Vigilance Committee, to send back,
In shirts of tar, and feather-doublets quilted
With forty stripes save one, all Yankee comers,
Uncircumcised and Gentile, aliens from
The Commonwealth of Israel, who despise
The prize of the high calling of the saints,
Who plant amidst this heathen wilderness
Pure gospel institutions, sanctified
By patriarchal use. The meeting opened
With prayer, as was most fitting. Half an hour,
Or thereaway, I groaned, and strove, and wrestled,
As Jacob did at Penuel, till the power
Fell on the people, and they cried 'Amen!'
'Glory to God!' and stamped and clapped their hands;
And the rough river boatmen wiped their eyes;
'Go it, old hoss!' they cried, and cursed the niggers—
Fulfilling thus the word of prophecy,
'Cursëd be Canaan.' After prayer, the meeting
Chose a committee—good and pious men—
A Presbyterian Elder, Baptist deacon,
A local preacher, three or four class-leaders,
Anxious inquirers, and renewed backsliders,
A score in all—to watch the river ferry,
(As they of old did watch the fords of Jordan,)
And cut off all whose Yankee tongues refuse
The Shibboleth of the Nebraska bill.
And then, in answer to repeated calls,
I gave a brief account of what I saw
In Washington; and truly many hearts
Rejoiced to know the President, and you
And all the Cabinet regularly hear
The gospel message of a Sunday morning,
Drinking with thirsty souls of the sincere
Milk of the Word. Glory! Amen, and Selah!

Here, at the Mission, all things have gone well:
The brother who, throughout my absence, acted
As overseer, assures me that the crops
Never were better. I have lost one negro,
A first-rate hand, but obstinate and sullen.
He ran away some time last spring, and hid
In the river timber. There my Indian converts
Found him, and treed and shot him. For the rest,
The heathens round about begin to feel
The influence of our pious ministrations
And works of love; and some of them already
Have purchased negroes, and are settling down
As sober Christians! Bless the Lord for this!
I know it will rejoice you. You, I hear,
Are on the eve of visiting Chicago,
To fight with the wild beasts of Ephesus,
Long John, and Dutch Free-Soilers. May your arm
Be clothed with strength, and on your tongue be found
The sweet oil of persuasion. So desires
Your brother and co-laborer. Amen!

P.S. All's lost. Even while I write these lines,
The Yankee abolitionists are coming
Upon us like a flood—grim, stalwart men,
Each face set like a flint of Plymouth Rock
Against our institutions—staking out
Their farm lots on the wooded Wakarusa,
Or squatting by the mellow-bottomed Kansas;
The pioneers of mightier multitudes,
The small rain-patter, ere the thunder shower
Drowns the dry prairies. Hope from man is not.
Oh, for a quiet berth at Washington,
Snug naval chaplaincy, or clerkship, where
These rumors of free labor and free soil
Might never meet me more. Better to be

Door-keeper in the White House, than to dwell
Amidst these Yankee tents, that, whitening, show
On the green prairie like a fleet becalmed.
Methinks I hear a voice come up the river
From those far bayous, where the alligators
Mount guard around the camping filibusters:
'Shake off the dust of Kansas. Turn to Cuba—
(That golden orange just about to fall,
O'er-ripe, into the Democratic lap;)
Keep pace with Providence, or, as we say,
Manifest destiny. Go forth and follow
The message of *our* gospel, thither borne
Upon the point of Quitman's bowie-knife,
And the persuasive lips of Colt's revolvers.
There may'st thou, underneath thy vine and fig-tree,
Watch thy increase of sugar cane and negroes,
Calm as a patriarch in his eastern tent!'
Amen: So mote it be. So prays your friend.

BURIAL OF BARBER.

Thomas Barber was shot December 6, 1855, near Lawrence, Kansas.

Bear him, comrades, to his grave;
Never over one more brave
Shall the prairie grasses weep,
In the ages yet to come,
When the millions in our room,
What we sow in tears, shall reap.

Bear him up the icy hill,
With the Kansas, frozen still
As his noble heart, below,
And the land he came to till
With a freeman's thews and will,
And his poor hut roofed with snow!

One more look of that dead face,
Of his murder's ghastly trace!
One more kiss, O widowed one
Lay your left hands on his brow,
Lift your right hands up, and vow
That his work shall yet be done.

Patience, friends! The eye of God
Every path by Murder trod
Watches, lidless, day and night;
And the dead man in his shroud,
And his widow weeping loud,
And our hearts, are in His sight.

Every deadly threat that swells
With the roar of gambling hells,
Every brutal jest and jeer,
Every wicked thought and plan
Of the cruel heart of man,
Though but whispered, He can hear!

We in suffering, they in crime,
Wait the just award of time,
Wait the vengeance that is due;
Not in vain a heart shall break,
Not a tear for Freedom's sake
Fall unheeded: God is true.

While the flag with stars bedecked
Threatens where it should protect,
And the Law shakes hands with Crime,
What is left us but to wait,
Match our patience to our fate,
And abide the better time?

Patience, friends! The human heart
Everywhere shall take our part,
Everywhere for us shall pray;
On our side are nature's laws,
And God's life is in the cause
That we suffer for to-day.

Well to suffer is divine;
Pass the watchword down the line,
Pass the countersign: 'Endure.'
Not to him who rashly dares,
But to him who nobly bears,
Is the victor's garland sure.

Frozen earth to frozen breast,
Lay our slain one down to rest;
Lay him down in hope and faith,
And above the broken sod,
Once again, to Freedom's God,
Pledge ourselves for life or death,

That the State whose walls we lay,
In our blood and tears, to-day,
Shall be free from bonds of shame,
And our goodly land untrod
By the feet of Slavery, shod
With cursing as with flame!

Plant the Buckeye on his grave,
For the hunter of the slave
In its shadow cannot rest;
And let martyr mound and tree
Be our pledge and guaranty
Of the freedom of the West!

1856.

TO PENNSYLVANIA.

O STATE prayer-founded! never hung
Such choice upon a people's tongue,
Such power to bless or ban,
As that which makes thy whisper Fate,
For which on thee the centuries wait,
And destinies of man!

Across thy Alleghanian chain,
With groanings from a land in pain,
The west-wind finds its way:
Wild-wailing from Missouri's flood
The crying of thy children's blood
Is in thy ears to-day!

And unto thee in Freedom's hour
Of sorest need God gives the power
To ruin or to save;
To wound or heal, to blight or bless
With fertile field or wilderness,
A free home or a grave!

Then let thy virtue match the crime,
Rise to a level with the time;
And, if a son of thine
Betray or tempt thee, Brutus-like
For Fatherland and Freedom strike
As Justice gives the sign.

Wake, sleeper, from thy dream of ease,
The great occasion's forelock seize;
And let the north-wind strong,
And golden leaves of autumn, be
Thy coronal of Victory
And thy triumphal song.

10*th mo.*, 1856.

LE MARAIS DU CYGNE.

The massacre of unarmed and unoffending men, in Southern Kansas, in May, 1858, took place near the Marais du Cygne of the French *voyageurs*.

A BLUSH as of roses
Where rose never grew!
Great drops on the bunch-grass,
But not of the dew!
A taint in the sweet air
For wild bees to shun!
A stain that shall never
Bleach out in the sun!

Back, steed of the prairies!
Sweet song-bird, fly back!
Wheel hither, bald vulture!
Gray wolf, call thy pack!
The foul human vultures
Have feasted and fled;
The wolves of the Border
Have crept from the dead.

From the hearths of their cabins,
The fields of their corn,
Unwarned and unweaponed,
The victims were torn,—
By the whirlwind of murder
Swooped up and swept on
To the low, reedy fen-lands,
The Marsh of the Swan.

With a vain plea for mercy
No stout knee was crooked;
In the mouths of the rifles
Right manly they looked.
How paled the May sunshine,
O Marais du Cygne!
On death for the strong life,
On red grass for green!

In the homes of their rearing,
Yet warm with their lives,
Ye wait the dead only,
Poor children and wives!
Put out the red forge-fire,
The smith shall not come;
Unyoke the brown oxen,
The ploughman lies dumb.

Wind slow from the Swan's Marsh,
O dreary death-train,
With pressed lips as bloodless
As lips of the slain!
Kiss down the young eyelids,
Smooth down the gray hairs;
Let tears quench the curses
That burn through your prayers.

Strong man of the prairies,
Mourn bitter and wild!
Wail, desolate woman!
Weep, fatherless child!
But the grain of God springs up
From ashes beneath,
And the crown of His harvest
Is life out of death.

Not in vain on the dial
The shade moves along,
To point the great contrasts
Of right and of wrong:
Free homes and free altars,
Free prairie and flood,—
The reeds of the Swan's Marsh,
Whose bloom is of blood!

On the lintels of Kansas
That blood shall not dry;
Henceforth the Bad Angel
Shall harmless go by;
Henceforth to the sunset,
Unchecked on her way,
Shall Liberty follow
The march of the day.

1858.

THE PASS OF THE SIERRA.

All night above their rocky bed
They saw the stars march slow;
The wild Sierra overhead,
The desert's death below.

The Indian from his lodge of bark,
The gray bear from his den,
Beyond their camp-fire's wall of dark,
Glared on the mountain men.

Still upward turned, with anxious strain,
Their leader's sleepless eye,
Where splinters of the mountain chain
Stood black against the sky.

The night waned slow: at last, a glow,
A gleam of sudden fire,
Shot up behind the walls of snow,
And tipped each icy spire.

'Up, men!' he cried, 'yon rocky cone,
To-day, please God, we'll pass,
And look from Winter's frozen throne
On Summer's flowers and grass!'

They set their faces to the blast,
They trod the eternal snow,
And faint, worn, bleeding, hailed at last
The promised land below.

Behind, they saw the snow-cloud tossed
By many an icy horn;
Before, warm valleys, wood-embossed,
And green with vines and corn.

They left the Winter at their backs
To flap his baffled wing,
And downward, with the cataracts,
Leaped to the lap of Spring.

Strong leader of that mountain band,
Another task remains,
To break from Slavery's desert land
A path to Freedom's plains.

The winds are wild, the way is drear,
Yet, flashing through the night,
Lo! icy ridge and rocky spear
Blaze out in morning light!

Rise up, Frémont! and go before;
The Hour must have its Man;
Put on the hunting-shirt once more,
And lead in Freedom's van!

8th mo., 1856.

A SONG FOR THE TIME.

Written in the summer of 1856, during the political campaign of the Free Soil party under the candidacy of John C. Frémont.

Up, laggards of Freedom!—our free flag is cast
To the blaze of the sun and the wings of the blast;
Will ye turn from a struggle so bravely begun,
From a foe that is breaking, a field that 's half won?

Whoso loves not his kind, and who fears
not the Lord,
Let him join that foe's service, accursed
and abhorred!
Let him do his base will, as the slave only
can,—
Let him put on the bloodhound, and put
off the Man!

Let him go where the cold blood that
creeps in his veins
Shall stiffen the slave-whip, and rust on
his chains;
Where the black slave shall laugh in his
bonds, to behold
The White Slave beside him, self-fettered
and sold!

But ye, who still boast of hearts beating
and warm,
Rise, from lake shore and ocean's, like
waves in a storm,
Come, throng round our banner in
Liberty's name,
Like winds from your mountains, like
prairies aflame!

Our foe, hidden long in his ambush of
night,
Now, forced from his covert, stands black
in the light.
Oh, the cruel to Man, and the hateful to
God,
Smite him down to the earth, that is
cursed where he trod!

For deeper than thunder of summer's loud
shower,
On the dome of the sky God is striking
the hour!
Shall we falter before what we 've prayed
for so long,
When the Wrong is so weak, and the
Right is so strong?

Come forth all together! come old and
come young,
Freedom's vote in each hand, and her
song on each tongue;
Truth naked is stronger than Falsehood
in mail;
The Wrong cannot prosper, the Right
cannot fail!

Like leaves of the summer once numbered
the foe,
But the hoar-frost is falling, the northern
winds blow;
Like leaves of November erelong shall
they fall,
For earth wearies of them, and God 's
over all!

WHAT OF THE DAY?

Written during the stirring weeks when the great political battle for Freedom under Frémont's leadership was permitting strong hope of success,—a hope overshadowed and solemnized by a sense of the magnitude of the barbaric evil, and a forecast of the unscrupulous and desperate use of all its powers in the last and decisive struggle.

A SOUND of tumult troubles all the air,
Like the low thunders of a sultry sky
Far-rolling ere the downright lightnings
glare;
The hills blaze red with warnings; foes
draw nigh,
Treading the dark with challenge and
reply.
Behold the burden of the prophet's
vision;
The gathering hosts,—the Valley of
Decision,
Dusk with the wings of eagles wheeling
o'er.
Day of the Lord, of darkness and not
light!
It breaks in thunder and the whirl-
wind's roar!
Even so, Father! Let Thy will be
done;
Turn and o'erturn, end what Thou hast
begun
In judgment or in mercy: as for me,
If but the least and frailest, let me be
Evermore numbered with the truly free
Who find Thy service perfect liberty!
I fain would thank Thee that my mortal
life
Has reached the hour (albeit through
care and pain)
When Good and Evil, as for final strife,

Close dim and vast on Armageddon's plain;
And Michael and his angels once again
Drive howling back the Spirits of the Night.
Oh for the faith to read the signs aright
And, from the angle of Thy perfect sight,
See Truth's white banner floating on before;
And the Good Cause, despite of venal friends,
And base expedients, move to noble ends;
See Peace with Freedom make to Time amends,
And, through its cloud of dust, the threshing-floor,
Flailed by the thunder, heaped with chaffless grain!

1856.

A SONG

INSCRIBED TO THE FRÉMONT CLUBS.

Written after the election in 1856, which showed the immense gains of the Free Soil party, and insured its success in 1860.

Beneath thy skies, November!
Thy skies of cloud and rain,
Around our blazing camp-fires
We close our ranks again.
Then sound again the bugles,
Call the muster-roll anew;
If months have well-nigh won the field,
What may not four years do?

For God be praised! New England
Takes once more her ancient place;
Again the Pilgrim's banner
Leads the vanguard of the race.
Then sound again the bugles, etc.

Along the lordly Hudson,
A shout of triumph breaks;
The Empire State is speaking,
From the ocean to the lakes.
Then sound again the bugles, etc.

The Northern hills are blazing,
The Northern skies are bright;
And the fair young West is turning
Her forehead to the light!
Then sound again the bugles, etc.

Push every outpost nearer,
Press hard the hostile towers!
Another Balaklava,
And the Malakoff is ours!
Then sound again the bugles,
Call the muster-roll anew;
If months have well-nigh won the field,
What may not four years do?

THE PANORAMA.

[Written with a view to political effect in the Presidential campaign of 1856. It was read by T. Starr King at the opening of a course of lectures on slavery delivered in Boston at that time.]

'A! fredome is a nobill thing!
Fredome mayse man to haif liking.
Fredome all solace to man giffis;
He levys at ese that frely levys!
A nobil hart may haif nane ese
Na ellys nocht that may him plese
Gyff Fredome failythe.'

Archdeacon Barbour.

Through the long hall the shuttered windows shed
A dubious light on every upturned head;
On locks like those of Absalom the fair,
On the bald apex ringed with scanty hair,
On blank indifference and on curious stare;
On the pale Showman reading from his stage
The hieroglyphics of that facial page;
Half sad, half scornful, listening to the bruit
Of restless cane-tap and impatient foot,
And the shrill call, across the general din,
'Roll up your curtain! Let the show begin!'

At length a murmur like the winds that break
Into green waves the prairie's grassy lake,

Deepened and swelled to music clear and loud,
And, as the west-wind lifts a summer cloud,
The curtain rose, disclosing wide and far
A green land stretching to the evening star,
Fair rivers, skirted by primeval trees
And flowers hummed over by the desert bees,
Marked by tall bluffs whose slopes of greenness show
Fantastic outcrops of the rock below;
The slow result of patient Nature's pains,
And plastic fingering of her sun and rains;
Arch, tower, and gate, grotesquely windowed hall,
And long escarpment of half-crumbled wall,
Huger than those which, from steep hills of vine,
Stare through their loopholes on the travelled Rhine;
Suggesting vaguely to the gazer's mind
A fancy, idle as the prairie wind,
Of the land's dwellers in an age unguessed;
The unsung Jotuns of the mystic West.

Beyond, the prairie's sea-like swells surpass
The Tartar's marvels of his Land of Grass,
Vast as the sky against whose sunset shores
Wave after wave the billowy greenness pours;
And, onward still, like islands in that main
Loom the rough peaks of many a mountain chain,
Whence east and west a thousand waters run'
From winter lingering under summer's sun.
And, still beyond, long lines of foam and sand
Tell where Pacific rolls his waves a-land,
From many a wide-lapped port and land-locked bay,
Opening with thunderous pomp the world's highway
To Indian isles of spice, and marts of far Cathay.

'Such,' said the Showman, as the curtain fell,
'Is the new Canaan of our Israel;
The land of promise to the swarming North,
Which, hive-like, sends its annual surplus forth,
To the poor Southron on his worn-out soil,
Scathed by the curses of unnatural toil;
To Europe's exiles seeking home and rest,
And the lank nomads of the wandering West,
Who, asking neither, in their love of change
And the free bison's amplitude of range,
Rear the log-hut, for present shelter meant,
Not future comfort, like an Arab's tent.'

Then spake a shrewd on-looker, 'Sir,' said he,
'I like your picture, but I fain would see
A sketch of what your promised land will be
When, with electric nerve, and fiery-brained,
With Nature's forces to its chariot chained,
The future grasping, by the past obeyed,
The twentieth century rounds a new decade.'

Then said the Showman, sadly: 'He who grieves
Over the scattering of the sibyl's leaves
Unwisely mourns. Suffice it, that we know
What needs must ripen from the seeds we sow;
That present time is but the mould wherein
We cast the shapes of holiness and sin.
A painful watcher of the passing hour,
Its lust of gold, its strife for place and power;

Its lack of manhood, honor, reverence, truth,
Wise-thoughted age, and generous-hearted youth;
Nor yet unmindful of each better sign,
The low, far lights, which on th' horizon shine,
Like those which sometimes tremble on the rim
Of clouded skies when day is closing dim,
Flashing athwart the purple spears of rain
The hope of sunshine on the hills again:
I need no prophet's word, nor shapes that pass
Like clouding shadows o'er a magic glass;
For now, as ever, passionless and cold,
Doth the dread angel of the future hold
Evil and good before us, with no voice
Or warning look to guide us in our choice;
With spectral hands outreaching through the gloom
The shadowy contrasts of the coming doom.
Transferred from these, it now remains to give
The sun and shade of Fate's alternative.'

Then, with a burst of music, touching all
The keys of thrifty life,—the mill-stream's fall,
The engine's pant along its quivering rails,
The anvil's ring, the measured beat of flails,
The sweep of scythes, the reaper's whistled tune,
Answering the summons of the bells of noon,
The woodman's hail along the river shores,
The steamboat's signal, and the dip of oars:
Slowly the curtain rose from off a land
Fair as God's garden. Broad on either hand
The golden wheat-fields glimmered in the sun,
And the tall maize its yellow tassels spun.
Smooth highways set with hedge-rows living green,
With steepled towns through shaded vistas seen,
The school-house murmuring with its hive-like swarm,
The brook-bank whitening in the grist-mill's storm,
The painted farm-house shining through the leaves
Of fruited orchards bending at its eaves,
Where live again, around the Western hearth,
The homely old-time virtues of the North;
Where the blithe housewife rises with the day,
And well-paid labor counts his task a play.
And, grateful tokens of a Bible free,
And the free Gospel of Humanity,
Of diverse sects and differing names the shrines,
One in their faith, whate'er their outward signs,
Like varying strophes of the same sweet hymn
From many a prairie's swell and river's brim,
A thousand church-spires sanctify the air
Of the calm Sabbath, with their sign of prayer.

Like sudden nightfall over bloom and green
The curtain dropped: and, momently, between
The clank of fetter and the crack of thong,
Half sob, half laughter, music swept along;
A strange refrain, whose idle words and low,
Like drunken mourners, kept the time of woe;
As if the revellers at a masquerade
Heard in the distance funeral marches played.
Such music, dashing all his smiles with tears,
The thoughtful voyager on Pontchartrain hears,
Where, through the noonday dusk of wooded shores
The negro boatman, singing to his oars,

With a wild pathos borrowed of his wrong
Redeems the jargon of his senseless song.
'Look,' said the Showman, sternly, as he rolled
His curtain upward. 'Fate's reverse behold!'

A village straggling in loose disarray
Of vulgar newness, premature decay;
A tavern, crazy with its whiskey brawls,
With '*Slaves at Auction!*' garnishing its walls;
Without, surrounded by a motley crowd,
The shrewd-eyed salesman, garrulous and loud,
A squire or colonel in his pride of place,
Known at free fights, the caucus, and the race,
Prompt to proclaim his honor without blot,
And silence doubters with a ten-pace shot,
Mingling the negro-driving bully's rant
With pious phrase and democratic cant,
Yet never scrupling, with a filthy jest,
To sell the infant from its mother's breast,
Break through all ties of wedlock, home, and kin,
Yield shrinking girlhood up to graybeard sin;
Sell all the virtues with his human stock,
The Christian graces on his auction-block,
And coolly count on shrewdest bargains driven
In hearts regenerate, and in souls forgiven!

Look once again! The moving canvas shows
A slave plantation's slovenly repose,
Where, in rude cabins rotting midst their weeds,
The human chattel eats, and sleeps, and breeds;
And, held a brute, in practice, as in law,
Becomes in fact the thing he 's taken for.
There, early summoned to the hemp and corn,
The nursing mother leaves her child newborn;
There haggard sickness, weak and deathly faint,
Crawls to his task, and fears to make complaint;
And sad-eyed Rachels, childless in decay,
Weep for their lost ones sold and torn away!
Of ampler size the master's dwelling stands,
In shabby keeping with his half-tilled lands;
The gates unhinged, the yard with weeds unclean,
The cracked veranda with a tipsy lean.
Without, loose-scattered like a wreck adrift,
Signs of misrule and tokens of unthrift;
Within, profusion to discomfort joined,
The listless body and the vacant mind;
The fear, the hate, the theft and falsehood, born
In menial hearts of toil, and stripes, and scorn!
There, all the vices, which, like birds obscene,
Batten on slavery loathsome and unclean,
From the foul kitchen to the parlor rise,
Pollute the nursery where the child-heir lies,
Taint infant lips beyond all after cure,
With the fell poison of a breast impure;
Touch boyhood's passions with the breath of flame,
From girlhood's instincts steal the blush of shame.
So swells, from low to high, from weak to strong,
The tragic chorus of the baleful wrong;
Guilty or guiltless, all within its range
Feel the blind justice of its sure revenge.

Still scenes like these the moving chart reveals.
Up the long western steppes the blighting steals;
Down the Pacific slope the evil Fate
Glides like a shadow to the Golden Gate:
From sea to sea the drear eclipse is thrown,

From sea to sea the *Mauvaises Terres* have grown,
A belt of curses on the New World's zone!

The curtain fell. All drew a freer breath,
As men are wont to do when mournful death
Is covered from their sight. The Showman stood
With drooping brow in sorrow's attitude
One moment, then with sudden gesture shook
His loose hair back, and with the air and look
Of one who felt, beyond the narrow stage
And listening group, the presence of the age,
And heard the footsteps of the things to be,
Poured out his soul in earnest words and free.

'O friends!' he said, 'in this poor trick of paint
You see the semblance, incomplete and faint,
Of the two-fronted Future, which, to-day,
Stands dim and silent, waiting in your way.
To-day, your servant, subject to your will;
To-morrow, master, or for good or ill.
If the dark face of Slavery on you turns,
If the mad curse its paper barrier spurns,
If the world granary of the West is made
The last foul market of the slaver's trade,
Why rail at fate? The mischief is your own.
Why hate your neighbor? Blame yourselves alone!

'Men of the North! The South you charge with wrong
Is weak and poor, while you are rich and strong.
If questions,—idle and absurd as those
The old-time monks and Paduan doctors chose,—
Mere ghosts of questions, tariffs, and dead banks,
And scarecrow pontiffs, never broke your ranks,
Your thews united could, at once, roll back
The jostled nation to its primal track.
Nay, were you simply steadfast, manly, just,
True to the faith your fathers left in trust,
If stainless honor outweighed in your scale
A codfish quintal or a factory bale,
Full many a noble heart, (and such remain
In all the South, like Lot in Siddim's plain,
Who watch and wait, and from the wrong's control
Keep white and pure their chastity of soul,)
Now sick to loathing of your weak complaints,
Your tricks as sinners, and your prayers as saints,
Would half-way meet the frankness of your tone,
And feel their pulses beating with your own.

'The North! the South! no geographic line
Can fix the boundary or the point define,
Since each with each so closely interblends,
Where Slavery rises, and where Freedom ends.
Beneath your rocks the roots, far-reaching, hide
Of the fell Upas on the Southern side;
The tree whose branches in your northwinds wave
Dropped its young blossoms on Mount Vernon's grave;
The nursling growth of Monticello's crest
Is now the glory of the free Northwest;
To the wise maxims of her olden school
Virginia listened from thy lips, Rantoul;

Seward's words of power, and Sumner's fresh renown,
Flow from the pen that Jefferson laid down!
And when, at length, her years of madness o'er,
Like the crowned grazer on Euphrates' shore,
From her long lapse to savagery, her mouth
Bitter with baneful herbage, turns the South,
Resumes her old attire, and seeks to smooth
Her unkempt tresses at the glass of truth,
Her early faith shall find a tongue again,
New Wythes and Pinckneys swell that old refrain,
Her sons with yours renew the ancient pact,
The myth of Union prove at last a fact!
Then, if one murmur mars the wide content,
Some Northern lip will drawl the last dissent,
Some Union-saving patriot of your own
Lament to find his occupation gone.

'Grant that the North 's insulted, scorned, betrayed,
O'erreached in bargains with her neighbor made,
When selfish thrift and party held the scales
For peddling dicker, not for honest sales,—
Whom shall we strike? Who most deserves our blame?
The braggart Southron, open in his aim,
And bold as wicked, crashing straight through all
That bars his purpose, like a cannon-ball?
Or the mean traitor, breathing northern air,
With nasal speech and puritanic hair,
Whose cant the loss of principle survives,
As the mud-turtle e'en its head outlives;
Who, caught, chin-buried in some foul offence,
Puts on a look of injured innocence,
And consecrates his baseness to the cause
Of constitution, union, and the laws?

'Praise to the place-man who can hold aloof
His still unpurchased manhood, office-proof;
Who on his round of duty walks erect,
And leaves it only rich in self-respect;
As More maintained his virtue's lofty port
In the Eighth Henry's base and bloody court.
But, if exceptions here and there are found,
Who tread thus safely on enchanted ground,
The normal type, the fitting symbol still
Of those who fatten at the public mill,
Is the chained dog beside his master's door,
Or Circe's victim, feeding on all four!

'Give me the heroes who, at tuck of drum,
Salute thy staff, immortal Quattlebum!
Or they who, doubly armed with vote and gun,
Following thy lead, illustrious Atchison,
Their drunken franchise shift from scene to scene,
As tile-beard Jourdan did his guillotine!
Rather than him who, born beneath our skies,
To Slavery's hand its supplest tool supplies;
The party felon whose unblushing face
Looks from the pillory of his bribe of place,
And coolly makes a merit of disgrace,
Points to the footmarks of indignant scorn,
Shows the deep scars of satire's tossing horn;
And passes to his credit side the sum
Of all that makes a scoundrel's martyrdom!

'Bane of the North, its canker and its moth!
These modern Esaus, bartering rights for broth!

Taxing our justice, with their double claim,
As fools for pity, and as knaves for blame;
Who, urged by party, sect, or trade, within
The fell embrace of Slavery's sphere of sin,
Part at the outset with their moral sense,
The watchful angel set for Truth's defence;
Confound all contrasts, good and ill; reverse
The poles of life, its blessing and its curse;
And lose thenceforth from their perverted sight
The eternal difference 'twixt the wrong and right;
To them the Law is but the iron span
That girds the ankles of imbruted man;
To them the Gospel has no higher aim
Than simple sanction of the master's claim,
Dragged in the slime of Slavery's loathsome trail,
Like Chalier's Bible at his ass's tail!

'Such are the men who, with instinctive dread,
Whenever Freedom lifts her drooping head,
Make prophet-tripods of their office-stools,
And scare the nurseries and the village schools
With dire presage of ruin grim and great,
A broken Union and a foundered State!
Such are the patriots, self-bound to the stake
Of office, martyrs for their country's sake:
Who fill themselves the hungry jaws of Fate,
And by their loss of manhood save the State.
In the wide gulf themselves like Curtius throw,
And test the virtues of cohesive dough;
As tropic monkeys, linking heads and tails,
Bridge o'er some torrent of Ecuador's vales!

'Such are the men who in your churches rave
To swearing-point, at mention of the slave!
When some poor parson, haply unawares,
Stammers of freedom in his timid prayers;
Who, if some foot-sore negro through the town
Steals northward, volunteer to hunt him down.
Or, if some neighbor, flying from disease,
Courts the mild balsam of the Southern breeze,
With hue and cry pursue him on his track,
And write *Free-soiler* on the poor man's back.
Such are the men who leave the pedler's cart,
While faring South, to learn the driver's art,
Or, in white neckcloth, soothe with pious aim
The graceful sorrows of some languid dame,
Who, from the wreck of her bereavement, saves
The double charm of widowhood and slaves!
Pliant and apt, they lose no chance to show
To what base depths apostasy can go;
Outdo the natives in their readiness
To roast a negro, or to mob a press;
Poise a tarred schoolmate on the lyncher's rail,
Or make a bonfire of their birthplace mail!

'So some poor wretch, whose lips no longer bear
The sacred burden of his mother's prayer,
By fear impelled, or lust of gold enticed,
Turns to the Crescent from the Cross of Christ,

And, over-acting in superfluous zeal,
Crawls prostrate where the faithful only kneel,
Out-howls the Dervish, hugs his rags to court
The squalid Santon's sanctity of dirt;
And, when beneath the city gateway's span
Files slow and long the Meccan caravan,
And through its midst, pursued by Islam's prayers,
The prophet's Word some favored camel bears,
The marked apostate has his place assigned
The Koran-bearer's sacred rump behind,
With brush and pitcher following, grave and mute,
In meek attendance on the holy brute!

'Men of the North! beneath your very eyes,
By hearth and home, your real danger lies.
Still day by day some hold of freedom falls
Through home-bred traitors fed within its walls.
Men whom yourselves with vote and purse sustain,
At posts of honor, influence, and gain;
The right of Slavery to your sons to teach,
And "South-side" Gospels in your pulpits preach,
Transfix the Law to ancient freedom dear
On the sharp point of her subverted spear,
And imitate upon her cushion plump
The mad Missourian lynching from his stump;
Or, in your name, upon the Senate's floor
Yield up to Slavery all it asks, and more;
And, ere your dull eyes open to the cheat,
Sell your old homestead underneath your feet!
While such as these your loftiest outlooks hold,
While truth and conscience with your wares are sold,
While grave-browed merchants band themselves to aid
An annual man-hunt for their Southern trade,
What moral power within your grasp remains
To stay the mischief on Nebraska's plains?
High as the tides of generous impulse flow
As far rolls back the selfish undertow;
And all your brave resolves, though aimed as true
As the horse-pistol Balmawhapple drew,
To Slavery's bastions lend as slight a shock
As the poor trooper's shot to Stirling rock!

'Yet, while the need of Freedom's cause demands
The earnest efforts of your hearts and hands,
Urged by all motives that can prompt the heart
To prayer and toil and manhood's manliest part;
Though to the soul's deep tocsin Nature joins
The warning whisper of her Orphic pines,
The north-wind's anger, and the south-wind's sigh,
The midnight sword-dance of the northern sky,
And, to the ear that bends above the sod
Of the green grave-mounds in the Fields of God,
In low, deep murmurs of rebuke or cheer,
The land's dead fathers speak their hope or fear,
Yet let not Passion wrest from Reason's hand
The guiding rein and symbol of command.
Blame not the caution proffering to your zeal
A well-meant drag upon its hurrying wheel;
Nor chide the man whose honest doubt extends
To the means only, not the righteous ends;

Nor fail to weigh the scruples and the fears
Of milder natures and serener years.
In the long strife with evil which began
With the first lapse of new-created man,
Wisely and well has Providence assigned
To each his part,—some forward, some behind;
And they, too, serve who temper and restrain
The o'erwarm heart that sets on fire the brain.
True to yourselves, feed Freedom's altar-flame
With what you have; let others do the same.
Spare timid doubters; set like flint your face
Against the self-sold knaves of gain and place:
Pity the weak; but with unsparing hand
Cast out the traitors who infest the land;
From bar, press, pulpit, cast them everywhere,
By dint of fasting, if you fail by prayer.
And in their place bring men of antique mould,
Like the grave fathers of your Age of Gold;
Statesmen like those who sought the primal fount
Of righteous law, the Sermon on the Mount;
Lawyers who prize, like Quincy, (to our day
Still spared, Heaven bless him!) honor more than pay,
And Christian jurists, starry-pure, like Jay;
Preachers like Woolman, or like them who bore
The faith of Wesley to our Western shore,
And held no convert genuine till he broke
Alike his servants' and the Devil's yoke;
And priests like him who Newport's market trod,
And o'er its slave-ships shook the bolts of God!

So shall your power, with a wise prudence used,
Strong but forbearing, firm but not abused,
In kindly keeping with the good of all,
The nobler maxims of the past recall,
Her natural home-born right to Freedom give,
And leave her foe his robber-right,—to live.
Live, as the snake does in his noisome fen!
Live, as the wolf does in his bone-strewn den!
Live, clothed with cursing like a robe of flame,
The focal point of million-fingered shame!
Live, till the Southron, who, with all his faults,
Has manly instincts, in his pride revolts,
Dashes from off him, midst the glad world's cheers,
The hideous nightmare of his dream of years,
And lifts, self-prompted, with his own right hand,
The vile encumbrance from his glorious land!

'So, wheresoe'er our destiny sends forth
Its widening circles to the South or North,
Where'er our banner flaunts beneath the stars
Its mimic splendors and its cloudlike bars,
There shall Free Labor's hardy children stand
The equal sovereigns of a slaveless land.
And when at last the hunted bison tires,
And dies o'ertaken by the squatter's fires;
And westward, wave on wave, the living flood
Breaks on the snow-line of majestic Hood;
And lonely Shasta listening hears the tread
Of Europe's fair-haired children, Hesperled;

And, gazing downward through his hoar-
locks, sees
The tawny Asian climb his giant knees,
The Eastern sea shall hush his waves to
hear
Pacific's surf-beat answer Freedom's
cheer,
And one long rolling fire of triumph run
Between the sunrise and the sunset gun!'

My task is done. The Showman and
his show,
Themselves but shadows, into shadows
go;
And, if no song of idlesse I have sung,
Nor tints of beauty on the canvas flung;
If the harsh numbers grate on tender
ears,
And the rough picture overwrought ap-
pears;
With deeper coloring, with a sterner
blast,
Before my soul a voice and vision passed,
Such as might Milton's jarring trump
require,
Or glooms of Dante fringed with lurid
fire.
Oh, not of choice, for themes of public
wrong
I leave the green and pleasant paths of
song,
The mild, sweet words which soften and
adorn,
For sharp rebuke and bitter laugh of
scorn.
More dear to me some song of private
worth,
Some homely idyl of my native North,
Some summer pastoral of her inland
vales,
Or, grim and weird, her winter fireside
tales
Haunted by ghosts of unreturning sails;
Lost barks at parting hung from stem to
helm
With prayers of love like dreams on
Virgil's elm.
Nor private grief nor malice holds my
pen;
I owe but kindness to my fellow-men;
And, South or North, wherever hearts of
prayer
Their woes and weakness to our Father
bear,
Wherever fruits of Christian love are
found
In holy lives, to me is holy ground.
But the time passes. It were vain to
crave
A late indulgence. What I had I gave.
Forget the poet, but his warning heed,
And shame his poor word with your
nobler deed.

1856.

ON A PRAYER-BOOK,

WITH ITS FRONTISPIECE, ARY SCHEFFER'S 'CHRISTUS CONSOLATOR,' AMERICANIZED BY THE OMISSION OF THE BLACK MAN.

It is hardly to be credited, yet is true, that in the anxiety of the Northern merchant to conciliate his Southern customer, a publisher was found ready thus to mutilate Scheffer's picture. He intended his edition for use in the Southern States undoubtedly, but copies fell into the hands of those who believed literally in a gospel which was to preach liberty to the captive.

O ARY SCHEFFER! when beneath thine
eye,
Touched with the light that cometh
from above,
Grew the sweet picture of the dear
Lord's love,
No dream hadst thou that Christian hands
would tear
Therefrom the token of His equal care,
And make thy symbol of His truth
a lie!
The poor, dumb slave whose shackles fall
away
In His compassionate gaze, grubbed
smoothly out,
To mar no more the exercise devout
Of sleek oppression kneeling down to
pray
Where the great oriel stains the Sabbath
day!

Let whoso can before such praying-books
Kneel on his velvet cushion; I, for one,
Would sooner bow, a Parsee, to the sun,
Or tend a prayer-wheel in Thibetar brooks,
Or beat a drum on Yedo's temple-floor.
No falser idol man has bowed before,
In Indian groves or islands of the sea,
Than that which through the quaint-carved Gothic door
Looks forth,—a Church without humanity!
Patron of pride, and prejudice, and wrong,—
The rich man's charm and fetich of the strong,
The Eternal Fulness meted, clipped, and shorn,
The seamless robe of equal mercy torn,
The dear Christ hidden from His kindred flesh,
And, in His poor ones, crucified afresh!
Better the simple Lama scattering wide,
Where sweeps the storm Alechan's steppes along,
His paper horses for the lost to ride,
And wearying Buddha with his prayers to make
The figures living for the traveller's sake,
Than he who hopes with cheap praise to beguile
The ear of God, dishonoring man the while;
Who dreams the pearl gate's hinges, rusty grown,
Are moved by flattery's oil of tongue alone;
That in the scale Eternal Justice bears
The generous deed weighs less than selfish prayers,
And words intoned with graceful unction move
The Eternal Goodness more than lives of truth and love.
Alas, the Church! The reverend head of Jay,
Enhaloed with its saintly silvered hair,
Adorns no more the places of her prayer;
And brave young Tyng, too early called away,
Troubles the Haman of her courts no more
Like the just Hebrew at the Assyrian's door;
And her sweet ritual, beautiful but dead,
As the dry husk from which the grain is shed,
And holy hymns from which the life devout
Of saints and martyrs has wellnigh gone out,
Like candles dying in exhausted air,
For Sabbath use in measured grists are ground;
And, ever while the spiritual mill goes round,
Between the upper and the nether stones,
Unseen, unheard, the wretched bondman groans,
And urges his vain plea, prayer-smothered, anthem-drowned!

O heart of mine, keep patience! Looking forth,
As from the Mount of Vision, I behold,
Pure, just, and free, the Church of Christ on earth;
The martyr's dream, the golden age foretold!
And found, at last, the mystic Graal I see,
Brimmed with His blessing, pass from lip to lip
In sacred pledge of human fellowship;
And over all the songs of angels hear;
Songs of the love that casteth out all fear;
Songs of the Gospel of Humanity!
Lo! in the midst, with the same look He wore,
Healing and blessing on Gennesaret's shore,
Folding together, with the all-tender might
Of His great love, the dark hands and the white,
Stands the Consoler, soothing every pain,
Making all burdens light, and breaking every chain.

1859.

THE SUMMONS.

[After publishing this poem Whittier wrote to Lucy Larcom: 'I do not quite like the tone of *The Summons* now that it is published. It was, however, an expression of a state of mind which thee would regard as pardonable if thee knew all the circumstances. It is *too complaining*, and I hope I shall not be left to do such a thing again.']

My ear is full of summer sounds,
Of summer sights my languid eye;
Beyond the dusty village bounds
I loiter in my daily rounds,
And in the noon-time shadows lie.

I hear the wild bee wind his horn,
The bird swings on the ripened wheat,
The long green lances of the corn
Are tilting in the winds of morn,
The locust shrills his song of heat.

Another sound my spirit hears,
A deeper sound that drowns them all;
A voice of pleading choked with tears,
The call of human hopes and fears,
The Macedonian cry to Paul!

The storm-bell rings, the trumpet blows;
I know the word and countersign;
Wherever Freedom's vanguard goes,
Where stand or fall her friends or foes,
I know the place that should be mine.

Shamed be the hands that idly fold,
And lips that woo the reed's accord,
When laggard Time the hour has tolled
For true with false and new with old
To fight the battles of the Lord!

O brothers! blest by partial Fate
With power to match the will and deed,
To him your summons comes too late
Who sinks beneath his armor's weight,
And has no answer but God-speed!

1860.

TO WILLIAM H. SEWARD.[59]

On the 12th of January, 1861, Mr. Seward delivered in the Senate chamber a speech on *The State of the Union*, in which he urged the paramount duty of preserving the Union, and went as far as it was possible to go, without surrender of principles, in concessions to the Southern party, concluding his argument with these words: 'Having submitted my own opinions on this great crisis, it remains only to say, that I shall cheerfully lend to the government my best support in whatever prudent yet energetic efforts it shall make to preserve the public peace, and to maintain and preserve the Union; advising, only, that it practise, as far as possible, the utmost moderation, forbearance, and conciliation. . . . This Union has not yet accomplished what good for mankind was manifestly designed by Him who appoints the seasons and prescribes the duties of states and empires. No; if it were cast down by faction to-day, it would rise again and reappear in all its majestic proportions to-morrow. It is the only government that can stand here. Woe! woe! to the man that madly lifts his hand against it. It shall continue and endure; and men, in after times, shall declare that this generation, which saved the Union from such sudden and unlooked-for dangers, surpassed in magnanimity even that one which laid its foundations in the eternal principles of liberty, justice, and humanity.'

Statesman, I thank thee! and, if yet dissent
Mingles, reluctant, with my large content,
I cannot censure what was nobly meant.
But, while constrained to hold even Union less
Than Liberty and Truth and Righteousness,
I thank thee in the sweet and holy name
Of peace, for wise calm words that put to shame
Passion and party. Courage may be shown
Not in defiance of the wrong alone;
He may be bravest who, unweaponed, bears
The olive branch, and, strong in justice, spares

The rash wrong-doer, giving widest scope
To Christian charity and generous hope.
If, without damage to the sacred cause
Of Freedom and the safeguard of its laws—
If, without yielding that for which alone
We prize the Union, thou canst save it now
From a baptism of blood, upon thy brow
A wreath whose flowers no earthly soil have known,
Woven of the beatitudes, shall rest,
And the peacemaker be forever blest!

1861.

IN WAR TIME.

TO SAMUEL E. SEWALL AND HARRIET W. SEWALL,

OF MELROSE.

These lines to my old friends stood as dedication in the volume which contained a collection of pieces under the general title of *In War Time*. The group belonging distinctly under that title I have retained here; the other pieces in the volume are distributed among the appropriate divisions.

Olor Iscanus queries: 'Why should we
Vex at the land's ridiculous miserie?'
So on his Usk banks, in the blood-red dawn
Of England's civil strife, did careless Vaughan
Bemock his times. O friends of many years!
Though faith and trust are stronger than our fears,
And the signs promise peace with liberty,
Not thus we trifle with our country's tears
And sweat of agony. The future's gain
Is certain as God's truth; but, meanwhile, pain
Is bitter and tears are salt: our voices take
A sober tone; our very household songs
Are heavy with a nation's griefs and wrongs;
And innocent mirth is chastened for the sake
Of the brave hearts that nevermore shall beat,
The eyes that smile no more, the unreturning feet!

1863.

THY WILL BE DONE.

We see not, know not; all our way
Is night,—with Thee alone is day:
From out the torrent's troubled drift,
Above the storm our prayers we lift,
Thy will be done!

The flesh may fail, the heart may faint,
But who are we to make complaint,
Or dare to plead, in times like these,
The weakness of our love of ease?
Thy will be done!

We take with solemn thankfulness
Our burden up, nor ask it less,
And count it joy that even we
May suffer, serve, or wait for Thee,
Whose will be done!

Though dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice.
Thy will be done!

And if, in our unworthiness,
Thy sacrificial wine we press;
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done!

If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,
And, blest by Thee, our present pain,
Be Liberty's eternal gain,
Thy will be done!

Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of the destinies!
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain,
Thy will be done!

1861.

A WORD FOR THE HOUR.

THE firmament breaks up. In black eclipse
Light after light goes out. One evil star,
Luridly glaring through the smoke of war,
As in the dream of the Apocalypse,
Drags others down. Let us not weakly weep
Nor rashly threaten. Give us grace to keep
Our faith and patience; wherefore should we leap
On one hand into fratricidal fight,
Or, on the other, yield eternal right,
Frame lies of law, and good and ill confound?
What fear we? Safe on freedom's vantage-ground
Our feet are planted: let us there remain
In unrevengeful calm, no means untried
Which truth can sanction, no just claim denied,
The sad spectators of a suicide!
They break the links of Union: shall we light
The fires of hell to weld anew the chain
On that red anvil where each blow is pain?
Draw we not even now a freer breath,
As from our shoulders falls a load of death
Loathsome as that the Tuscan's victim bore
When keen with life to a dead horror bound?
Why take we up the accursed thing again?
Pity, forgive, but urge them back no more
Who, drunk with passion, flaunt disunion's rag
With its vile reptile-blazon. Let us press
The golden cluster on our brave old flag
In closer union, and, if numbering less,
Brighter shall shine the stars which still remain.

16th, 1st mo., 1861.

'EIN' FESTE BURG IST UNSER GOTT.'

LUTHER'S HYMN.

WE wait beneath the furnace-blast
The pangs of transformation;
Not painlessly doth God recast
And mould anew the nation.
Hot burns the fire
Where wrongs expire;
Nor spares the hand
That from the land
Uproots the ancient evil.

The hand-breadth cloud the sages feared
Its bloody rain is dropping;
The poison plant the fathers spared
All else is overtopping.
East, West, South, North,
It curses the earth;
All justice dies,
And fraud and lies
Live only in its shadow.

What gives the wheat-field blades of steel?
What points the rebel cannon?
What sets the roaring rabble's heel
On the old star-spangled pennon?
What breaks the oath
Of the men o' the South?
What whets the knife
For the Union's life?—
Hark to the answer: Slavery!

Then waste no blows on lesser foes
In strife unworthy freemen.
God lifts to-day the veil, and shows
The features of the demon!
O North and South,
Its victims both,
Can ye not cry,
'Let slavery die!'
And union find in freedom?

What though the cast-out spirit tear
The nation in his going?
We who have shared the guilt must share
The pang of his o'erthrowing!

Whate'er the loss,
Whate'er the cross,
Shall they complain
Of present pain
Who trust in God's hereafter?

For who that leans on His right arm
Was ever yet forsaken?
What righteous cause can suffer harm
If He its part has taken?
Though wild and loud,
And dark the cloud,
Behind its folds
His hand upholds
The calm sky of to-morrow!

Above the maddening cry for blood,
Above the wild war-drumming,
Let Freedom's voice be heard, with good
The evil overcoming.
Give prayer and purse
To stay the Curse
Whose wrong we share,
Whose shame we bear,
Whose end shall gladden Heaven!

In vain the bells of war shall ring
Of triumphs and revenges,
While still is spared the evil thing
That severs and estranges.
But blest the ear
That yet shall hear
The jubilant bell
That rings the knell
Of Slavery forever!

Then let the selfish lip be dumb,
And hushed the breath of sighing;
Before the joy of peace must come
The pains of purifying.
God give us grace
Each in his place
To bear his lot,
And, murmuring not,
Endure and wait and labor!

1861.

TO JOHN C. FRÉMONT.

On the 31st of August, 1861, General Frémont, then in charge of the Western Department, issued a proclamation which contained a clause, famous as the first announcement of emancipation: 'The property,' it declared, 'real and personal, of all persons in the State of Missouri, who shall take up arms against the United States, or who shall be directly proven to have taken active part with their enemies in the field, is declared to be confiscated to the public use; and their slaves, if any they have, are hereby declared free men.' Mr. Lincoln regarded the proclamation as premature and countermanded it, after vainly endeavoring to persuade Frémont of his own motion to revoke it.

Thy error, Frémont, simply was to act
A brave man's part, without the statesman's tact,
And, taking counsel but of common sense,
To strike at cause as well as consequence.
Oh, never yet since Roland wound his horn
At Roncesvalles, has a blast been blown
Far-heard, wide-echoed, startling as thine own,
Heard from the van of freedom's hope forlorn!
It had been safer, doubtless, for the time,
To flatter treason, and avoid offence
To that Dark Power whose underlying crime
Heaves upward its perpetual turbulence.
But if thine be the fate of all who break
The ground for truth's seed, or forerun their years
Till lost in distance, or with stout hearts make
A lane for freedom through the level spears,
Still take thou courage! God has spoken through thee,
Irrevocable, the mighty words, Be free!
The land shakes with them, and the slave's dull ear
Turns from the rice-swamp stealthily to hear.

Who would recall them now must first arrest
The winds that blow down from the free North-west,
Ruffling the Gulf; or like a scroll roll back
The Mississippi to its upper springs.
Such words fulfil their prophecy, and lack
But the full time to harden into things.

1861.

THE WATCHERS.

Beside a stricken field I stood;
On the torn turf, on grass and wood,
Hung heavily the dew of blood.

Still in their fresh mounds lay the slain,
But all the air was quick with pain
And gusty sighs and tearful rain.

Two angels, each with drooping head
And folded wings and noiseless tread,
Watched by that valley of the dead.

The one, with forehead saintly bland
And lips of blessing, not command,
Leaned, weeping, on her olive wand.

The other's brows were scarred and knit,
His restless eyes were watch-fires lit,
His hands for battle-gauntlets fit.

'How long!' — I knew the voice of Peace,—
'Is there no respite? no release?
When shall the hopeless quarrel cease?

'O Lord, how long! One human soul
Is more than any parchment scroll,
Or any flag thy winds unroll.

'What price was Ellsworth's, young and brave?
How weigh the gift that Lyon gave,
Or count the cost of Winthrop's grave?

'O brother! if thine eye can see,
Tell how and when the end shall be,
What hope remains for thee and me.'

Then Freedom sternly said: 'I shun
No strife nor pang beneath the sun,
When human rights are staked and won.

'I knelt with Ziska's hunted flock,
I watched in Toussaint's cell of rock,
I walked with Sidney to the block.

'The moor of Marston felt my tread.
Through Jersey snows the march I led,
My voice Magenta's charges sped.

'But now, through weary day and night,
I watch a vague and aimless fight
For leave to strike one blow aright.

'On either side my foe they own:
One guards through love his ghastly throne,
And one through fear to reverence grown.

'Why wait we longer, mocked, betrayed,
By open foes, or those afraid
To speed thy coming through my aid?

'Why watch to see who win or fall?
I shake the dust against them all,
I leave them to their senseless brawl.'

'Nay,' Peace implored: 'yet longer wait;
The doom is near, the stake is great:
God knoweth if it be too late.

'Still wait and watch; the way prepare
Where I with folded wings of prayer
May follow, weaponless and bare.'

'Too late!' the stern, sad voice replied,
'Too late!' its mournful echo sighed,
In low lament the answer died.

A rustling as of wings in flight,
An upward gleam of lessening white,
So passed the vision, sound and sight.

But round me, like a silver bell
Rung down the listening sky to tell
Of holy help, a sweet voice fell.

'Still hope and trust,' it sang; 'the rod
Must fall, the wine-press must be trod,
But all is possible with God!'

1862.

TO ENGLISHMEN.

Written when, in the stress of our terrible war, the English ruling class, with few exceptions, were either coldly indifferent or hostile to the party of freedom. Their attitude was illustrated by caricatures of America, among which was one of a slaveholder and cowhide, with the motto, 'Haven't I a right to wallop my nigger?'

You flung your taunt across the wave;
We bore it as became us,
Well knowing that the fettered slave
Left friendly lips no option save
To pity or to blame us.

You scoffed our plea. 'Mere lack of will,
Not lack of power,' you told us:
We showed our free-state records; still
You mocked, confounding good and ill,
Slave-haters and slaveholders.

We struck at Slavery; to the verge
Of power and means we checked it;
Lo!—presto, change! its claims you urge,
Send greetings to it o'er the surge,
And comfort and protect it.

But yesterday you scarce could shake,
In slave-abhorring rigor,
Our Northern palms for conscience' sake:
To-day you clasp the hands that ache
With 'walloping the nigger!'

O Englishmen!—in hope and creed,
In blood and tongue our brothers!
We too are heirs of Runnymede;
And Shakespeare's fame and Cromwell's deed
Are not alone our mother's.

'Thicker than water,' in one rill
Through centuries of story
Our Saxon blood has flowed, and still
We share with you its good and ill,
The shadow and the glory.

Joint heirs and kinfolk, leagues of wave
Nor length of years can part us:
Your right is ours to shrine and grave,
The common freehold of the brave,
The gift of saints and martyrs.

Our very sins and follies teach
Our kindred frail and human:
We carp at faults with bitter speech,
The while, for one unshared by each,
We have a score in common.

We bowed the heart, if not the knee,
To England's Queen, God bless her!
We praised you when your slaves went free:
We seek to unchain ours. Will ye
Join hands with the oppressor?

And is it Christian England cheers
The bruiser, not the bruisëd?
And must she run, despite the tears
And prayers of eighteen hundred years,
Amuck in Slavery's crusade?

Oh, black disgrace! Oh, shame and loss
Too deep for tongue to phrase on!
Tear from your flag its holy cross,
And in your van of battle toss
The pirate's skull-bone blazon!

1862.

MITHRIDATES AT CHIOS.

It is recorded that the Chians, when subjugated by Mithridates of Cappadocia, were delivered up to their own slaves, to be carried away captive to Colchis. Athenæus considers this a just punishment for their wickedness in first introducing the slave-trade into Greece. From this ancient villainy of the Chians the proverb arose, 'The Chian hath bought himself a master.'

Know'st thou, O slave-cursed land!
How, when the Chian's cup of guilt
Was full to overflow, there came
God's justice in the sword of flame
That, red with slaughter to its hilt,
Blazed in the Cappadocian victor's hand?

The heavens are still and far;
But, not unheard of awful Jove,
The sighing of the island slave
Was answered, when the Ægean wave
The keels of Mithridates clove,
And the vines shrivelled in the breath of war.

'Robbers of Chios! hark,'
The victor cried, 'to Heaven's decree!
Pluck your last cluster from the vine,
Drain your last cup of Chian wine;
Slaves of your slaves, your doom shall be,
In Colchian mines by Phasis rolling dark.'

Then rose the long lament
From the hoar sea-god's dusky caves:
The priestess rent her hair and cried,
'Woe! woe! The gods are sleepless-eyed!'
And, chained and scourged, the slaves of slaves,
The lords of Chios into exile went.

'The gods at last pay well,'
So Hellas sang her taunting song,
'The fisher in his net is caught,
The Chian hath his master bought;'
And isle from isle, with laughter long,
Took up and sped the mocking parable.

Once more the slow, dumb years
Bring their avenging cycle round,
And, more than Hellas taught of old,
Our wiser lesson shall be told,
Of slaves uprising, freedom-crowned,
To break, not wield, the scourge wet with their blood and tears.

1863.

AT PORT ROYAL.

In November, 1861, a Union force under Commodore Dupont and General Sherman captured Port Royal, and from this point as a basis of operations the neighboring islands between Charleston and Savannah were taken possession of. The early occupation of this district, where the negro population was greatly in excess of the white, gave an opportunity which was at once seized upon, of practically emancipating the slaves and of beginning that work of civilization which was accepted as the grave responsibility of those who had labored for freedom.

The tent-lights glimmer on the land,
The ship-lights on the sea;
The night-wind smooths with drifting sand
Our track on lone Tybee.

At last our grating keels outslide,
Our good boats forward swing;
And while we ride the land-locked tide,
Our negroes row and sing.

For dear the bondman holds his gifts
Of music and of song:
The gold that kindly Nature sifts
Among his sands of wrong;

The power to make his toiling days
And poor home-comforts please;
The quaint relief of mirth that plays
With sorrow's minor keys.

Another glow than sunset's fire
Has filled the west with light,
Where field and garner, barn and byre,
Are blazing through the night.

The land is wild with fear and hate,
The rout runs mad and fast;
From hand to hand, from gate to gate
The flaming brand is passed.

The lurid glow falls strong across
Dark faces broad with smiles:
Not theirs the terror, hate, and loss
That fire yon blazing piles.

With oar-strokes timing to their song,
They weave in simple lays
The pathos of remembered wrong,
The hope of better days,—

The triumph-note that Miriam sung,
The joy of uncaged birds:
Softening with Afric's mellow tongue
Their broken Saxon words.

SONG OF THE NEGRO BOATMEN.

Oh, praise an' tanks! De Lord He come
To set de people free;
An' massa tink it day ob doom,
An' we ob jubilee.
De Lord dat heap de Red Sea waves
He jus' as 'trong as den;
He say de word: we las' night slaves;
To-day, de Lord's free men.
De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
We 'll hab de rice an' corn;
Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
De driver blow his horn!

Ole massa on he trabbels gone;
He leaf de land behind:
De Lord's breff blow him furder on,
Like corn-shuck in de wind.
We own de hoe, we own de plough,
We own de hands dat hold;
We sell de pig, we sell de cow,
But nebber chile be sold.
De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
We 'll hab de rice an' corn;
Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
De driver blow his horn!

We pray de Lord: He gib us signs
Dat some day we be free;
De norf-wind tell it to de pines,
De wild-duck to de sea;
We tink it when de church-bell ring,
We dream it in de dream;
De rice-bird mean it when he sing,
De eagle when he scream.
De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
We 'll hab de rice an' corn;
Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
De driver blow his horn!

We know de promise nebber fail,
An' nebber lie de word;
So, like de 'postles in de jail,
We waited for de Lord:
An' now He open ebery door,
An' trow away de key;
He tink we lub Him so before,
We lub Him better free.
De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
He 'll gib de rice an' corn;
Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
De driver blow his horn!

So sing our dusky gondoliers;
And with a secret pain,
And smiles that seem akin to tears,
We hear the wild refrain.

We dare not share the negro's trust,
Nor yet his hope deny;
We only know that God is just,
And every wrong shall die.

Rude seems the song; each swarthy face,
Flame-lighted, ruder still:
We start to think that hapless race
Must shape our good or ill;

That laws of changeless justice bind
Oppressor with oppressed;
And, close as sin and suffering joined,
We march to Fate abreast.

Sing on, poor hearts! your chant shall be
Our sign of blight or bloom,
The Vala-song of Liberty,
Or death-rune of our doom!

1862.

ASTRÆA AT THE CAPITOL.

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 1862.

[The reference in the fourth stanza is to Dr. Reuben Crandall of Washington, who, in 1834, was arrested and confined in the old city prison until his health was destroyed. His crime was in lending to a brother physician Whittier's pamphlet *Justice and Expediency*.]

When first I saw our banner wave
Above the nation's council-hall,
I heard beneath its marble wall
The clanking fetters of the slave!

In the foul market-place I stood,
And saw the Christian mother sold,
And childhood with its locks of gold,
Blue-eyed and fair with Saxon blood.

I shut my eyes, I held my breath,
And, smothering down the wrath and shame
That set my Northern blood aflame,
Stood silent,—where to speak was death.

Beside me gloomed the prison-cell
Where wasted one in slow decline
For uttering simple words of mine,
And loving freedom all too well.

The flag that floated from the dome
Flapped menace in the morning air;
I stood a perilled stranger where
The human broker made his home.

For crime was virtue: Gown and Sword
And Law their threefold sanction gave,
And to the quarry of the slave
Went hawking with our symbol-bird.

On the oppressor's side was power;
And yet I knew that every wrong,
However old, however strong,
But waited God's avenging hour.

I knew that truth would crush the lie,—
Somehow, some time, the end would be;
Yet scarcely dared I hope to see
The triumph with my mortal eye.

But now I see it! In the sun
A free flag floats from yonder dome,
And at the nation's hearth and home
The justice long delayed is done.

Not as we hoped, in calm of prayer,
The message of deliverance comes,
But heralded by roll of drums
On waves of battle-troubled air!

Midst sounds that madden and appall,
The song that Bethlehem's shepherds knew!
The harp of David melting through
The demon-agonies of Saul!

Not as we hoped; but what are we?
Above our broken dreams and plans
God lays, with wiser hand than man's,
The corner-stones of liberty.

I cavil not with Him: the voice
That freedom's blessed gospel tells
Is sweet to me as silver bells,
Rejoicing! yea, I will rejoice!

Dear friends still toiling in the sun;
Ye dearer ones who, gone before,
Are watching from the eternal shore
The slow work by your hands begun,

Rejoice with me! The chastening rod
Blossoms with love; the furnace heat
Grows cool beneath His blessed feet
Whose form is as the Son of God!

Rejoice! Our Marah's bitter springs
Are sweetened; on our ground of grief
Rise day by day in strong relief
The prophecies of better things.

Rejoice in hope! The day and night
Are one with God, and one with them
Who see by faith the cloudy hem
Of Judgment fringed with Mercy's light!

1862.

THE BATTLE AUTUMN OF 1862.

The flags of war like storm-birds fly,
The charging trumpets blow;
Yet rolls no thunder in the sky,
No earthquake strives below.

And, calm and patient, Nature keeps
Her ancient promise well,
Though o'er her bloom and greenness sweeps
The battle's breath of hell.

And still she walks in golden hours
Through harvest-happy farms,
And still she wears her fruits and flowers
Like jewels on her arms.

What mean the gladness of the plain,
This joy of eve and morn,
The mirth that shakes the beard of grain
And yellow locks of corn?

Ah! eyes may well be full of tears,
And hearts with hate are hot;
But even-paced come round the years,
And Nature changes not.

She meets with smiles our bitter grief,
With songs our groans of pain;
She mocks with tint of flower and leaf
The war-field's crimson stain.

Still, in the cannon's pause, we hear
Her sweet thanksgiving-psalm;
Too near to God for doubt or fear,
She shares the eternal calm.

She knows the seed lies safe below
The fires that blast and burn;
For all the tears of blood we sow
She waits the rich return.

She sees with clearer eye than ours
The good of suffering born,—
The hearts that blossom like her flowers,
And ripen like her corn.

Oh, give to us, in times like these,
The vision of her eyes;
And make her fields and fruited trees
Our golden prophecies!

Oh, give to us her finer ear!
Above this stormy din,
We too would hear the bells of cheer
Ring peace and freedom in.

1862.

HYMN,

SUNG AT CHRISTMAS BY THE SCHOLARS OF ST. HELENA'S ISLAND, S. C.

[Written at the request of the teacher, Miss Charlotte Forten, now Mrs. Grimké.]

Oh, none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we!
We 're free on Carolina's shore,
We 're all at home and free.

Thou Friend and Helper of the poor,
Who suffered for our sake,
To open every prison door,
And every yoke to break!

Bend low Thy pitying face and mild,
And help us sing and pray;
The hand that blessed the little child,
Upon our foreheads lay.

We hear no more the driver's horn,
No more the whip we fear,
This holy day that saw Thee born
Was never half so dear.

The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet St. Helen's Isle.

We praise Thee in our songs to-day,
To Thee in prayer we call,
Make swift the feet and straight the way
Of freedom unto all.

Come once again, O blessed Lord!
Come walking on the sea!
And let the mainlands hear the word
That sets the island free!

1863.

THE PROCLAMATION.

President Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation was issued January 1, 1863.

Saint Patrick, slave to Milcho of the herds
Of Ballymena, wakened with these words:
'Arise, and flee
Out from the land of bondage, and be free!'

Glad as a soul in pain, who hears from heaven
The angels singing of his sins forgiven,
And, wondering, sees
His prison opening to their golden keys,

He rose a man who laid him down a slave,
Shook from his locks the ashes of the grave,
And outward trod
Into the glorious liberty of God.

He cast the symbols of his shame away;
And, passing where the sleeping Milcho lay,
Though back and limb
Smarted with wrong, he prayed, 'God pardon him!'

So went he forth; but in God's time he came
To light on Uilline's hills a holy flame;
And, dying, gave
The land a saint that lost him as a slave.

O dark, sad millions, patiently and dumb
Waiting for God, your hour at last has come,
And freedom's song
Breaks the long silence of your night of wrong!

Arise and flee! shake off the vile restraint
Of ages; but, like Ballymena's saint,
The oppressor spare,
Heap only on his head the coals of prayer.

Go forth, like him! like him return again,
To bless the land whereon in bitter pain
Ye toiled at first,
And heal with freedom what your slavery cursed.

1863.

ANNIVERSARY POEM.

Read before the Alumni of the Friends' Yearly Meeting School, at the Annual Meeting at Newport, R. I., 15th 6th mo., 1863.

Once more, dear friends, you meet beneath
A clouded sky:
Not yet the sword has found its sheath,
And on the sweet spring airs the breath
Of war floats by.

Yet trouble springs not from the ground,
Nor pain from chance;
The Eternal order circles round,
And wave and storm find mete and bound
In Providence.

Full long our feet the flowery ways
Of peace have trod,
Content with creed and garb and phrase:
A harder path in earlier days
Led up to God.

Too cheaply truths, once purchased dear,
Are made our own;
Too long the world has smiled to hear
Our boast of full corn in the ear
By others sown;

To see us stir the martyr fires
Of long ago,
And wrap our satisfied desires
In the singed mantles that our sires
Have dropped below.

But now the cross our worthies bore
On us is laid;
Profession's quiet sleep is o'er,
And in the scale of truth once more
Our faith is weighed.

The cry of innocent blood at last
Is calling down
An answer in the whirlwind-blast,
The thunder and the shadow cast
From Heaven's dark frown.

The land is red with judgments. Who
Stands guiltless forth?
Have we been faithful as we knew,
To God and to our brother true,
To Heaven and Earth?

How faint, through din of merchandise
And count of gain,
Have seemed to us the captive's cries!
How far away the tears and sighs
Of souls in pain!

This day the fearful reckoning comes
To each and all;
We hear amidst our peaceful homes
The summons of the conscript drums,
The bugle's call.

Our path is plain; the war-net draws
Round us in vain.
While, faithful to the Higher Cause,
We keep our fealty to the laws
Through patient pain.

The levelled gun, the battle-brand,
We may not take:
But, calmly loyal, we can stand
And suffer with our suffering land
For conscience' sake.

Why ask for ease where all is pain?
Shall we alone
Be left to add our gain to gain,
When over Armageddon's plain
The trump is blown?

To suffer well is well to serve;
Safe in our Lord
The rigid lines of law shall curve
To spare us; from our heads shall swerve
Its smiting sword.

And light is mingled with the gloom,
And joy with grief;
Divinest compensations come,
Through thorns of judgment mercies bloom
In sweet relief.

Thanks for our privilege to bless,
By word and deed,
The widow in her keen distress,
The childless and the fatherless,
The hearts that bleed!

For fields of duty, opening wide,
Where all our powers
Are tasked the eager steps to guide
Of millions on a path untried:
The slave is ours!

Ours by traditions dear and old,
Which make the race
Our wards to cherish and uphold,
And cast their freedom in the mould
Of Christian grace.

And we may tread the sick-bed floors
Where strong men pine,
And, down the groaning corridors,
Pour freely from our liberal stores
The oil and wine.

Who murmurs that in these dark days
His lot is cast?
God's hand within the shadow lays
The stones whereon His gates of praise
Shall rise at last.

Turn and o'erturn, O outstretched Hand!
Nor stint, nor stay;
The years have never dropped their sand
On mortal issue vast and grand
As ours to-day.

Already, on the sable ground
Of man's despair
Is Freedom's glorious picture found,
With all its dusky hands unbound
Upraised in prayer.

Oh, small shall seem all sacrifice
And pain and loss,
When God shall wipe the weeping eyes,
For suffering give the victor's prize,
The crown for cross!

BARBARA FRIETCHIE.

This poem was written in strict conformity to the account of the incident as I had it from respectable and trustworthy sources. It has since been the subject of a good deal of conflicting testimony, and the story was probably incorrect in some of its details. It is admitted by all that Barbara Frietchie was no myth, but a worthy and highly esteemed gentlewoman, intensely loyal and a hater of the Slavery Rebellion, holding her Union flag sacred and keeping it with her Bible; that when the Confederates halted before her house, and entered her dooryard, she denounced them in vigorous language, shook her cane in their faces, and drove them out; and when General Burnside's troops followed close upon Jackson's, she waved her flag and cheered them. It is stated that May Quantrell, a brave and loyal lady in another part of the city, did wave her flag in sight of the Confederates. It is possible that there has been a blending of the two incidents.

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall;

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

'Halt!'—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
'Fire!'—out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

'Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag,' she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word;

'Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!' he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town! 60

1863.

WHAT THE BIRDS SAID.

THE birds against the April wind
Flew northward, singing as they flew;
They sang, 'The land we leave behind
Has swords for corn-blades, blood for dew.'

'O wild-birds, flying from the South,
What saw and heard ye, gazing down?'
'We saw the mortar's upturned mouth,
The sickened camp, the blazing town!

'Beneath the bivouac's starry lamps,
We saw your march-worn children die;
In shrouds of moss, in cypress swamps,
We saw your dead uncoffined lie.

'We heard the starving prisoner's sighs,
And saw, from line and trench, your sons
Follow our flight with home-sick eyes
Beyond the battery's smoking guns.'

'And heard and saw ye only wrong
And pain,' I cried, 'O wing-worn flocks?'
'We heard,' they sang, 'the freedman's song,
The crash of Slavery's broken locks!

'We saw from new, uprising States
The treason-nursing mischief spurned,
As, crowding Freedom's ample gates,
The long-estranged and lost returned.

'O'er dusky faces, seamed and old,
And hands horn-hard with unpaid toil,
With hope in every rustling fold,
We saw your star-dropt flag uncoil.

'And struggling up through sounds accursed,
A grateful murmur clomb the air;
A whisper scarcely heard at first,
It filled the listening heavens with prayer.

'And sweet and far, as from a star,
Replied a voice which shall not cease,
Till, drowning all the noise of war,
It sings the blessed song of peace!'

So to me, in a doubtful day
Of chill and slowly greening spring,
Low stooping from the cloudy gray,
The wild-birds sang or seemed to sing.

They vanished in the misty air,
The song went with them in their flight;
But lo! they left the sunset fair,
And in the evening there was light.

April, 1864.

THE MANTLE OF ST. JOHN DE MATHA.

A LEGEND OF 'THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE,' A. D. 1154–1864.

A STRONG and mighty Angel,
Calm, terrible, and bright,
The cross in blended red and blue
Upon his mantle white!

Two captives by him kneeling,
Each on his broken chain,
Sang praise to God who raiseth
The dead to life again!

Dropping his cross-wrought mantle,
'Wear this,' the Angel said;
'Take thou, O Freedom's priest, its sign,—
The white, the blue, and red.'

Then rose up John de Matha
In the strength the Lord Christ gave,
And begged through all the land of France
The ransom of the slave.

The gates of tower and castle
Before him open flew,
The drawbridge at his coming fell,
The door-bolt backward drew.

For all men owned his errand,
And paid his righteous tax;
And the hearts of lord and peasant
Were in his hands as wax.

At last, outbound from Tunis,
His bark her anchor weighed,
Freighted with seven-score Christian souls
Whose ransom he had paid.

But, torn by Paynim hatred,
Her sails in tatters hung;
And on the wild waves, rudderless,
A shattered hulk she swung.

'God save us!' cried the captain,
'For naught can man avail;
Oh, woe betide the ship that lacks
Her rudder and her sail!

'Behind us are the Moormen;
At sea we sink or strand:
There 's death upon the water,
There 's death upon the land!'

Then up spake John de Matha:
'God's errands never fail!
Take thou the mantle which I wear,
And make of it a sail.'

They raised the cross-wrought mantle,
The blue, the white, the red;
And straight before the wind off-shore
The ship of Freedom sped.

'God help us!' cried the seamen,
'For vain is mortal skill:
The good ship on a stormy sea
Is drifting at its will.'

Then up spake John de Matha:
'My mariners, never fear!
The Lord whose breath has filled her sail
May well our vessel steer!'

So on through storm and darkness
They drove for weary hours;
And lo! the third gray morning shone
On Ostia's friendly towers.

And on the walls the watchers
The ship of mercy knew,—
They knew far off its holy cross,
The red, the white, and blue.

And the bells in all the steeples
Rang out in glad accord,
To welcome home to Christian soil
The ransomed of the Lord.

So runs the ancient legend
By bard and painter told;
And lo! the cycle rounds again,
The new is as the old!

With rudder foully broken,
And sails by traitors torn,
Our country on a midnight sea
Is waiting for the morn.

Before her, nameless terror;
Behind, the pirate foe;
The clouds are black above her,
The sea is white below.

The hope of all who suffer,
The dread of all who wrong,
She drifts in darkness and in storm,
How long, O Lord! how long?

But courage, O my mariners!
Ye shall not suffer wreck,
While up to God the freedman's prayers
Are rising from your deck.

Is not your sail the banner
Which God hath blest anew,
The mantle that De Matha wore,
The red, the white, the blue?

Its hues are all of heaven,—
The red of sunset's dye,
The whiteness of the moon-lit cloud,
The blue of morning's sky.

Wait cheerily, then, O mariners,
For daylight and for land;
The breath of God is in your sail,
Your rudder is His hand.

Sail on, sail on, deep-freighted
With blessings and with hopes;
The saints of old with shadowy hands
Are pulling at your ropes.

Behind ye holy martyrs
Uplift the palm and crown;
Before ye unborn ages send
Their benedictions down.

Take heart from John de Matha!—
God's errands never fail!
Sweep on through storm and darkness,
The thunder and the hail!

Sail on! The morning cometh,
The port ye yet shall win;
And all the bells of God shall ring
The good ship bravely in!

1865.

LAUS DEO!

On hearing the bells ring on the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. The resolution was adopted by Congress, January 31, 1865. The ratification by the requisite number of States was announced December 18, 1865. [The suggestion came to the poet as he sat in the Friends' Meeting-house in Amesbury, where he was present at the regular Fifth-day meeting. All sat in silence, but on his return to his home, he recited a portion of the poem, not yet committed to paper, to his house-mates in the garden room. 'It wrote itself, or rather sang itself, while the bells rang,' he wrote to Lucy Larcom.]

It is done!
Clang of bell and roar of gun
Send the tidings up and down.
How the belfries rock and reel!
How the great guns, peal on peal,
Fling the joy from town to town!

Ring, O bells!
Every stroke exulting tells
Of the burial hour of crime.
Loud and long, that all may hear,
Ring for every listening ear
Of Eternity and Time!

Let us kneel:
God's own voice is in that peal,
And this spot is holy ground.
Lord, forgive us! What are we,
That our eyes this glory see,
That our ears have heard the sound!

For the Lord
On the whirlwind is abroad ;
In the earthquake He has spoken ;
He has smitten with His thunder
The iron walls asunder,
And the gates of brass are broken !

Loud and long
Lift the old exulting song,
Sing with Miriam by the sea,
He has cast the mighty down ;
Horse and rider sink and drown ;
'He hath triumphed gloriously !'

Did we dare,
In our agony of prayer,
Ask for more than He has done ?
When was ever His right hand
Over any time or land
Stretched as now beneath the sun ?

How they pale,
Ancient myth and song and tale,
In this wonder of our days,
When the cruel rod of war
Blossoms white with righteous law,
And the wrath of man is praise !

Blotted out !
All within and all about
Shall a fresher life begin ;
Freer breathe the universe
As it rolls its heavy curse
On the dead and buried sin !

It is done !
In the circuit of the sun
Shall the sound thereof go forth.
It shall bid the sad rejoice,
It shall give the dumb a voice,
It shall belt with joy the earth !

Ring and swing,
Bells of joy ! On morning's wing
Send the song of praise abroad !
With a sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns,
Who alone is Lord and God !

1865.

HYMN

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF EMANCIPATION AT NEWBURYPORT.

Not unto us who did but seek
The word that burned within to speak,
Not unto us this day belong
The triumph and exultant song.

Upon us fell in early youth
The burden of unwelcome truth,
And left us, weak and frail and few,
The censor's painful work to do.

Thenceforth our life a fight became,
The air we breathed was hot with blame ;
For not with gauged and softened tone
We made the bondman's cause our own.

We bore, as Freedom's hope forlorn,
The private hate, the public scorn ;
Yet held through all the paths we trod
Our faith in man and trust in God.

We prayed and hoped ; but still, with awe,
The coming of the sword we saw ;
We heard the nearing steps of doom,
We saw the shade of things to come.

In grief which they alone can feel
Who from a mother's wrong appeal,
With blended lines of fear and hope
We cast our country's horoscope.

For still within her house of life
We marked the lurid sign of strife,
And, poisoning and imbittering all,
We saw the star of Wormwood fall.

Deep as our love for her became
Our hate of all that wrought her shame,
And if, thereby, with tongue and pen
We erred,—we were but mortal men.

We hoped for peace ; our eyes survey
The blood-red dawn of Freedom's day :
We prayed for love to loose the chain ;
'T is shorn by battle's axe in twain !

Nor skill nor strength nor zeal of ours
Has mined and heaved the hostile towers;
Not by our hands is turned the key
That sets the sighing captives free.

A redder sea than Egypt's wave
Is piled and parted for the slave;
A darker cloud moves on in light;
A fiercer fire is guide by night!

The praise, O Lord! is Thine alone,
In Thy own way Thy work is done!
Our poor gifts at Thy feet we cast,
To whom be glory, first and last!

1865.

AFTER THE WAR.

THE PEACE AUTUMN.

Written for the Essex County Agricultural Festival, 1865.

THANK God for rest, where none molest,
And none can make afraid;
For Peace that sits as Plenty's guest
Beneath the homestead shade!

Bring pike and gun, the sword's red scourge,
The negro's broken chains,
And beat them at the blacksmith's forge
To ploughshares for our plains.

Alike henceforth our hills of snow,
And vales where cotton flowers;
All streams that flow, all winds that blow,
Are Freedom's motive-powers.

Henceforth to Labor's chivalry
Be knightly honors paid;
For nobler than the sword's shall be
The sickle's accolade.

Build up an altar to the Lord,
O grateful hearts of ours!
And shape it of the greenest sward
That ever drank the showers.

Lay all the bloom of gardens there,
And there the orchard fruits;
Bring golden grain from sun and air,
From earth her goodly roots.

There let our banners droop and flow,
The stars uprise and fall;
Our roll of martyrs, sad and slow,
Let sighing breezes call.

Their names let hands of horn and tan
And rough-shod feet applaud,
Who died to make the slave a man,
And link with toil reward.

There let the common heart keep time
To such an anthem sung
As never swelled on poet's rhyme,
Or thrilled on singer's tongue.

Song of our burden and relief,
Of peace and long annoy;
The passion of our mighty grief
And our exceeding joy!

A song of praise to Him who filled
The harvests sown in tears,
And gave each field a double yield
To feed our battle-years!

A song of faith that trusts the end
To match the good begun,
Nor doubts the power of Love to blend
The hearts of men as one!

TO THE THIRTY-NINTH CONGRESS.

The thirty-ninth congress was that which met in 1865, after the close of the war, when it was charged with the great question of reconstruction; the uppermost subject in men's minds was the standing of those who had recently been in arms against the Union and their relations to the freedmen.

O PEOPLE-CHOSEN! are ye not
Likewise the chosen of the Lord,
To do His will and speak His word?

From the loud thunder-storm of war
Not man alone hath called ye forth,
But He, the God of all the earth!

The torch of vengeance in your hands
He quenches; unto Him belongs
The solemn recompense of wrongs.

Enough of blood the land has seen,
And not by cell or gallows-stair
Shall ye the way of God prepare.

Say to the pardon-seekers: Keep
Your manhood, bend no suppliant knees,
Nor palter with unworthy pleas.

Above your voices sounds the wail
Of starving men; we shut in vain
Our eyes to Pillow's ghastly stain.

What words can drown that bitter cry? 19
What tears wash out the stain of death?
What oaths confirm your broken faith?

From you alone the guaranty
Of union, freedom, peace, we claim;
We urge no conqueror's terms of shame.

Alas! no victor's pride is ours; 25
We bend above our triumphs won
Like David o'er his rebel son.

Be men, not beggars. Cancel all
By one brave, generous action; trust
Your better instincts, and be just! 30

Make all men peers before the law,
Take hands from off the negro's throat,
Give black and white an equal vote.

Keep all your forfeit lives and lands,
But give the common law's redress 35
To labor's utter nakedness.

Revive the old heroic will;
Be in the right as brave and strong
As ye have proved yourselves in wrong.

Defeat shall then be victory, 40
Your loss the wealth of full amends,
And hate be love, and foes be friends.

Then buried be the dreadful past,
Its common slain be mourned, and let
All memories soften to regret. 45

Then shall the Union's mother-heart
Her lost and wandering ones recall,
Forgiving and restoring all,—

And Freedom break her marble trance
Above the Capitolian dome, 50
Stretch hands, and bid ye welcome home!

November, 1865.

THE HIVE AT GETTYSBURG.

In the old Hebrew myth the lion's frame,
So terrible alive,
Bleached by the desert's sun and wind, became
The wandering wild bees' hive;
And he who, lone and naked-handed, tore
Those jaws of death apart, 6
In after time drew forth their honeyed store
To strengthen his strong heart.

Dead seemed the legend: but it only slept
To wake beneath our sky; 10
Just on the spot whence ravening Treason crept
Back to its lair to die,
Bleeding and torn from Freedom's mountain bounds,
A stained and shattered drum
Is now the hive where, on their flowery rounds, 15
The wild bees go and come.

Unchallenged by a ghostly sentinel,
They wander wide and far,
Along green hillsides, sown with shot and shell,
Through vales once choked with war. 20
The low reveille of their battle-drum
Disturbs no morning prayer:
With deeper peace in summer noons their hum
Fills all the drowsy air.

And Samson's riddle is our own to-day, 25
Of sweetness from the strong,
Of union, peace, and freedom plucked away
From the rent jaws of wrong.
From Treason's death we draw a purer life,
As, from the beast he slew, 30
A sweetness sweeter for his bitter strife
The old-time athlete drew!

1868.

HOWARD AT ATLANTA.

RIGHT in the track where Sherman
Ploughed his red furrow,
Out of the narrow cabin,
Up from the cellar's burrow,
Gathered the little black people,
With freedom newly dowered,
Where, beside their Northern teacher,
Stood the soldier, Howard.

He listened and heard the children
Of the poor and long enslavëd
Reading the words of Jesus,
Singing the songs of David.
Behold!—the dumb lips speaking,
The blind eyes seeing!
Bones of the Prophet's vision
Warmed into being!

Transformed he saw them passing
Their new life's portal!
Almost it seemed the mortal
Put on the immortal.
No more with the beasts of burden,
No more with stone and clod,
But crowned with glory and honor
In the image of God!

There was the human chattel
Its manhood taking;
There, in each dark, bronze statue,
A soul was waking!
The man of many battles,
With tears his eyelids pressing,
Stretched over those dusky foreheads
His one-armed blessing.

And he said: 'Who hears can never
Fear for or doubt you;
What shall I tell the children
Up North about you?'
Then ran round a whisper, a murmur,
Some answer devising;
And a little boy stood up: 'General,
Tell 'em we 're rising!'

O black boy of Atlanta!
But half was spoken:
The slave's chain and the master's
Alike are broken.

The one curse of the races
Held both in tether:
They are rising,—all are rising,
The black and white together!

O brave men and fair women!
Ill comes of hate and scorning:
Shall the dark faces only
Be turned to morning?—
Make Time your sole avenger,
All-healing, all-redressing;
Meet Fate half-way, and make it
A joy and blessing!

1869.

THE EMANCIPATION GROUP.

Moses Kimball, a citizen of Boston, presented to the city a duplicate of the Freedman's Memorial statue erected in Lincoln Square, Washington. The group, which stands in Park Square, represents the figure of a slave, from whose limbs the broken fetters have fallen, kneeling in gratitude at the feet of Lincoln. The group was designed by Thomas Ball, and was unveiled December 9, 1879. These verses were written for the occasion.

AMIDST thy sacred effigies
Of old renown give place,
O city, Freedom-loved! to his
Whose hand unchained a race.

Take the worn frame, that rested not
Save in a martyr's grave;
The care-lined face, that none forgot,
Bent to the kneeling slave.

Let man be free! The mighty word
He spake was not his own;
An impulse from the Highest stirred
These chiselled lips alone.

The cloudy sign, the fiery guide,
Along his pathway ran,
And Nature, through his voice, denied
The ownership of man.

We rest in peace where these sad eyes
Saw peril, strife, and pain;
His was the nation's sacrifice,
And ours the priceless gain.

O symbol of God's will on earth
As it is done above!
Bear witness to the cost and worth
Of justice and of love.

Stand in thy place and testify
To coming ages long,
That truth is stronger than a lie,
And righteousness than wrong.

THE JUBILEE SINGERS.

A number of students of Fisk University, under the direction of one of the officers, gave a series of concerts in the Northern States, for the purpose of establishing the college on a firmer financial foundation. Their hymns and songs, mostly in a minor key, touched the hearts of the people, and were received as peculiarly expressive of a race delivered from bondage.

Voice of a people suffering long,
The pathos of their mournful song,
The sorrow of their night of wrong!

Their cry like that which Israel gave,
A prayer for one to guide and save,
Like Moses by the Red Sea's wave!

The stern accord her timbrel lent
To Miriam's note of triumph sent
O'er Egypt's sunken armament!

The tramp that startled camp and town,
And shook the walls of slavery down,
The spectral march of old John Brown!

The storm that swept through battle-days,
The triumph after long delays,
The bondmen giving God the praise!

Voice of a ransomed race, sing on
Till Freedom's every right is won,
And slavery's every wrong undone!

1880.

GARRISON.

The earliest poem in this division was my youthful tribute to the great reformer when himself a young man he was first sounding his trumpet in Essex County. I close with the verses inscribed to him at the end of his earthly career, May 24, 1879. My poetical service in the cause of freedom is thus almost synchronous with his life of devotion to the same cause.[60]

The storm and peril overpast,
The hounding hatred shamed and still,
Go, soul of freedom! take at last
The place which thou alone canst fill.

Confirm the lesson taught of old—
Life saved for self is lost, while they
Who lose it in His service hold
The lease of God's eternal day.

Not for thyself, but for the slave
Thy words of thunder shook the world;
No selfish griefs or hatred gave
The strength wherewith thy bolts were hurled.

From lips that Sinai's trumpet blew
We heard a tender under song;
Thy very wrath from pity grew,
From love of man thy hate of wrong.

Now past and present are as one;
The life below is life above;
Thy mortal years have but begun
Thy immortality of love.

With somewhat of thy lofty faith
We lay thy outworn garment by,
Give death but what belongs to death,
And life the life that cannot die!

Not for a soul like thine the calm
Of selfish ease and joys of sense;
But duty, more than crown or palm,
Its own exceeding recompense.

Go up and on! thy day well done,
Its morning promise well fulfilled,
Arise to triumphs yet unwon,
To holier tasks that God has willed.

Go, leave behind thee all that mars
The work below of man for man;
With the white legions of the stars
Do service such as angels can.

Wherever wrong shall right deny
Or suffering spirits urge their plea,
Be thine a voice to smite the lie,
A hand to set the captive free!

Songs of Labor and Reform

THE QUAKER OF THE OLDEN TIME.

THE Quaker of the olden time!
How calm and firm and true,
Unspotted by its wrong and crime,
He walked the dark earth through.
The lust of power, the love of gain,
The thousand lures of sin
Around him, had no power to stain
The purity within.

With that deep insight which detects
All great things in the small,
And knows how each man's life affects
The spiritual life of all,
He walked by faith and not by sight,
By love and not by law;
The presence of the wrong or right
He rather felt than saw.

He felt that wrong with wrong partakes,
That nothing stands alone,
That whoso gives the motive, makes
His brother's sin his own.
And, pausing not for doubtful choice
Of evils great or small,
He listened to that inward voice
Which called away from all.

O Spirit of that early day,
So pure and strong and true,
Be with us in the narrow way
Our faithful fathers knew.
Give strength the evil to forsake,
The cross of Truth to bear,
And love and reverent fear to make
Our daily lives a prayer!

1838.

DEMOCRACY.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.—*Matthew* vii. 12.

BEARER of Freedom's holy light,
Breaker of Slavery's chain and rod,
The foe of all which pains the sight,
Or wounds the generous ear of God!

Beautiful yet thy temples rise,
Though there profaning gifts are thrown;
And fires unkindled of the skies
Are glaring round thy altar-stone.

Still sacred, though thy name be breathed
By those whose hearts thy truth deride;
And garlands, plucked from thee, are wreathed
Around the haughty brows of Pride.

Oh, ideal of my boyhood's time!
The faith in which my father stood,
Even when the sons of Lust and Crime
Had stained thy peaceful courts with blood!

Still to those courts my footsteps turn,
For through the mists which darken there,
I see the flame of Freedom burn,—
The Kebla of the patriot's prayer!

The generous feeling, pure and warm,
Which owns the right of all divine;
The pitying heart, the helping arm,
The prompt self-sacrifice, are thine.

Beneath thy broad, impartial eye,
How fade the lines of caste and birth!
How equal in their suffering lie
The groaning multitudes of earth!

Still to a stricken brother true,
Whatever clime hath nurtured him;
As stooped to heal the wounded Jew
The worshipper of Gerizim.

By misery unrepelled, unawed
By pomp or power, thou seest a Man
In prince or peasant, slave or lord,
Pale priest, or swarthy artisan.

Through all disguise, form, place, or name,
Beneath the flaunting robes of sin,
Through poverty and squalid shame,
Thou lookest on the man within.

On man, as man, retaining yet,
Howe'er debased, and soiled, and dim,
The crown upon his forehead set,
The immortal gift of God to him.

And there is reverence in thy look;
For that frail form which mortals wear
The Spirit of the Holiest took,
And veiled His perfect brightness there.

Not from the shallow babbling fount
Of vain philosophy thou art;
He who of old on Syria's Mount
Thrilled, warmed, by turns, the listener's heart,

In holy words which cannot die,
In thoughts which angels leaned to know,
Proclaimed thy message from on high,
Thy mission to a world of woe.

That voice's echo hath not died!
From the blue lake of Galilee,
And Tabor's lonely mountain-side,
It calls a struggling world to thee.

Thy name and watchword o'er this land
I hear in every breeze that stirs,
And round a thousand altars stand
Thy banded party worshippers.

Not to these altars of a day,
At party's call, my gift I bring;
But on thy olden shrine I lay
A freeman's dearest offering:

The voiceless utterance of his will,—
His pledge to Freedom and to Truth,
That manhood's heart remembers still
The homage of his generous youth.

Election Day, 1841.

THE GALLOWS.

Written on reading pamphlets published by clergymen against the abolition of the gallows. [Originally entitled *Lines.*]

I.

The suns of eighteen centuries have shone
Since the Redeemer walked with man, and made
The fisher's boat, the cavern's floor of stone,
And mountain moss, a pillow for His head;
And He, who wandered with the peasant Jew,
And broke with publicans the bread of shame,
And drank with blessings, in His Father's name,
The water which Samaria's outcast drew,
Hath now His temples upon every shore,
Altar and shrine and priest; and incense dim
Evermore rising, with low prayer and hymn,
From lips which press the temple's marble floor,
Or kiss the gilded sign of the dread cross
He bore.

II.

Yet as of old, when, meekly 'doing good,'
He fed a blind and selfish multitude,
And even the poor companions of His lot
With their dim earthly vision knew Him not,

How ill are His high teachings understood!
Where He hath spoken Liberty, the priest
At His own altar binds the chain anew;
Where He hath bidden to Life's equal feast,
The starving many wait upon the few;
Where He hath spoken Peace, His name hath been
The loudest war-cry of contending men;
Priests, pale with vigils, in His name have blessed
The unsheathed sword, and laid the spear in rest,
Wet the war-banner with their sacred wine,
And crossed its blazon with the holy sign;
Yea, in His name who bade the erring live,
And daily taught His lesson, to forgive!
Twisted the cord and edged the murderous steel;
And, with His words of mercy on their lips,
Hung gloating o'er the pincers' burning grips,
And the grim horror of the straining wheel;
Fed the slow flame which gnawed the victim's limb,
Who saw before his searing eyeballs swim
The image of their Christ in cruel zeal,
Through the black torment-smoke, held mockingly to him!

III.

The blood which mingled with the desert sand,
And beaded with its red and ghastly dew
The vines and olives of the Holy Land;
The shrieking curses of the hunted Jew;
The white-sown bones of heretics, where'er
They sank beneath the Crusade's holy spear;
Goa's dark dungeons, Malta's sea-washed cell,
Where with the hymns the ghostly fathers sung
Mingled the groans by subtle torture wrung,
Heaven's anthem blending with the shriek of hell!
The midnight of Bartholomew, the stake
Of Smithfield, and that thrice-accursed flame
Which Calvin kindled by Geneva's lake;
New England's scaffold, and the priestly sneer
Which mocked its victims in that hour of fear,
When guilt itself a human tear might claim,—
Bear witness, O Thou wronged and merciful One!
That Earth's most hateful crimes have in Thy name been done!

IV.

Thank God! that I have lived to see the time
When the great truth begins at last to find
An utterance from the deep heart of mankind,
Earnest and clear, that all Revenge is Crime,
That man is holier than a creed, that all
Restraint upon him must consult his good,
Hope's sunshine linger on his prison wall,
And Love look in upon his solitude.
The beautiful lesson which our Saviour taught
Through long, dark centuries its way hath wrought
Into the common mind and popular thought;
And words, to which by Galilee's lake shore
The humble fishers listened with hushed oar,
Have found an echo in the general heart,
And of the public faith become a living part.

V.

Who shall arrest this tendency? Bring back
The cells of Venice and the bigot's rack?

Harden the softening human heart again
To cold indifference to a brother's pain?
Ye most unhappy men! who, turned away
From the mild sunshine of the Gospel day,
Grope in the shadows of Man's twilight time,
What mean ye, that with ghoul-like zest ye brood,
O'er those foul altars streaming with warm blood,
Permitted in another age and clime?
Why cite that law with which the bigot Jew
Rebuked the Pagan's mercy, when he knew
No evil in the Just One? Wherefore turn
To the dark, cruel past? Can ye not learn
From the pure Teacher's life how mildly free
Is the great Gospel of Humanity?
The Flamen's knife is bloodless, and no more
Mexitli's altars soak with human gore,
No more the ghastly sacrifices smoke
Through the green arches of the Druid's oak;
And ye of milder faith, with your high claim
Of prophet-utterance in the Holiest name,
Will ye become the Druids of our time!
Set up your scaffold-altars in our land,
And, consecrators of Law's darkest crime,
Urge to its loathsome work the hangman's hand?
Beware, lest human nature, roused at last,
From its peeled shoulder your encumbrance cast,
And, sick to loathing of your cry for blood,
Rank ye with those who led their victims round
The Celt's red altar and the Indian's mound,
Abhorred of Earth and Heaven, a pagan brotherhood!

1842.

SEED-TIME AND HARVEST.

As o'er his furrowed fields which lie
Beneath a coldly dropping sky,
Yet chill with winter's melted snow,
The husbandman goes forth to sow,

Thus, Freedom, on the bitter blast
The ventures of thy seed we cast,
And trust to warmer sun and rain
To swell the germs and fill the grain.

Who calls thy glorious service hard?
Who deems it not its own reward?
Who, for its trials, counts it less
A cause of praise and thankfulness?

It may not be our lot to wield
The sickle in the ripened field;
Nor ours to hear, on summer eves,
The reaper's song among the sheaves.

Yet where our duty's task is wrought
In unison with God's great thought,
The near and future blend in one,
And whatsoe'er is willed, is done!

And ours the grateful service whence
Comes day by day the recompense;
The hope, the trust, the purpose stayed,
The fountain and the noonday shade.

And were this life the utmost span,
The only end and aim of man,
Better the toil of fields like these
Than waking dream and slothful ease.

But life, though falling like our grain,
Like that revives and springs again;
And, early called, how blest are they
Who wait in heaven their harvest-day!

1843.

TO THE REFORMERS OF ENGLAND.

This poem was addressed to those who like Richard Cobden and John Bright were seeking the reform of political evils in Great Britain by peaceful and Christian means. It will be remembered that the Anti-Corn-Law League was in the midst of its labors at this time.

God bless ye, brothers! in the fight
Ye 're waging now, ye cannot fail,
For better is your sense of right
Than king-craft's triple mail.

Than tyrant's law, or bigot's ban,
More mighty is your simplest word;
The free heart of an honest man
Than crosier or the sword.

Go, let your blinded Church rehearse
The lesson it has learned so well;
It moves not with its prayer or curse
The gates of heaven or hell.

Let the State scaffold rise again;
Did Freedom die when Russell died?
Forget ye how the blood of Vane
From earth's green bosom cried?

The great hearts of your olden time
Are beating with you, full and strong;
All holy memories and sublime
And glorious round ye throng.

The bluff, bold men of Runnymede
Are with ye still in times like these;
The shades of England's mighty dead,
Your cloud of witnesses!

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
By every wind and every tide;
The voice of Nature and of God
Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
Are those which Heaven itself has wrought,
Light, Truth, and Love; your battle-ground
The free, broad field of Thought.

No partial, selfish purpose breaks
The simple beauty of your plan,
Nor lie from throne or altar shakes
Your steady faith in man.

The languid pulse of England starts
And bounds beneath your words of power,
The beating of her million hearts
Is with you at this hour!

O ye who, with undoubting eyes,
Through present cloud and gathering storm,
Behold the span of Freedom's skies,
And sunshine soft and warm;

Press bravely onward! not in vain
Your generous trust in human-kind;
The good which bloodshed could not gain
Your peaceful zeal shall find.

Press on! the triumph shall be won
Of common rights and equal laws,
The glorious dream of Harrington,
And Sidney's good old cause.

Blessing the cotter and the crown,
Sweetening worn Labor's bitter cup;
And, plucking not the highest down,
Lifting the lowest up.

Press on! and we who may not share
The toil or glory of your fight
May ask, at least, in earnest prayer,
God's blessing on the right!

1843.

THE HUMAN SACRIFICE.

Some leading sectarian papers had lately published the letter of a clergyman, giving an account of his attendance upon a criminal (who had committed murder during a fit of intoxication), at the time of his execution, in western New York. The writer describes the agony of the wretched being, his abortive attempts at prayer, his appeal for life, his fear of a violent death; and, after declaring his belief that the poor victim died without hope of salvation, concludes with a warm eulogy upon the gallows, being more than ever convinced of its utility by the awful dread and horror which it inspired.

I.

Far from his close and noisome cell,
By grassy lane and sunny stream,
Blown clover field and strawberry dell,
And green and meadow freshness, fell
The footsteps of his dream.
Again from careless feet the dew
Of summer's misty morn he shook;
Again with merry heart he threw
His light line in the rippling brook.

Back crowded all his school-day joys;
He urged the ball and quoit again,
And heard the shout of laughing boys
Come ringing down the walnut glen.
Again he felt the western breeze,
With scent of flowers and crisping hay;
And down again through wind-stirred trees
He saw the quivering sunlight play.
An angel in home's vine-hung door,
He saw his sister smile once more;
Once more the truant's brown-locked head
Upon his mother's knees was laid,
And sweetly lulled to slumber there,
With evening's holy hymn and prayer!

II.

He woke. At once on heart and brain
The present Terror rushed again;
Clanked on his limbs the felon's chain!
He woke, to hear the church-tower tell
Time's footfall on the conscious bell,
And, shuddering, feel that clanging din
His life's last hour had ushered in;
To see within his prison-yard,
Through the small window, iron barred,
The gallows shadow rising dim
Between the sunrise heaven and him;
A horror in God's blessed air;
A blackness in His morning light;
Like some foul devil-altar there
Built up by demon hands at night.
And, maddened by that evil sight,
Dark, horrible, confused, and strange,
A chaos of wild, weltering change,
All power of check and guidance gone,
Dizzy and blind, his mind swept on.
In vain he strove to breathe a prayer,
In vain he turned the Holy Book,
He only heard the gallows-stair
Creak as the wind its timbers shook.
No dream for him of sin forgiven,
While still that baleful spectre stood,
With its hoarse murmur, '*Blood for Blood!*'
Between him and the pitying Heaven!

III.

Low on his dungeon floor he knelt,
And smote his breast, and on his chain,
Whose iron clasp he always felt,
His hot tears fell like rain;
And near him, with the cold, calm look
And tone of one whose formal part,
Unwarmed, unsoftened of the heart,
Is measured out by rule and book,
With placid lip and tranquil blood,
The hangman's ghostly ally stood,
Blessing with solemn text and word
The gallows-drop and strangling cord;
Lending the sacred Gospel's awe
And sanction to the crime of Law.

IV.

He saw the victim's tortured brow,
The sweat of anguish starting there,
The record of a nameless woe
In the dim eye's imploring stare,
Seen hideous through the long, damp hair,—
Fingers of ghastly skin and bone
Working and writhing on the stone!
And heard, by mortal terror wrung
From heaving breast and stiffened tongue,
The choking sob and low hoarse prayer;
As o'er his half-crazed fancy came
A vision of the eternal flame,
Its smoking cloud of agonies,
Its demon-worm that never dies,
The everlasting rise and fall
Of fire-waves round the infernal wall;
While high above that dark red flood,
Black, giant-like, the gallows stood;
Two busy fiends attending there:
One with cold mocking rite and prayer,
The other with impatient grasp,
Tightening the death-rope's strangling clasp.

V.

The unfelt rite at length was done,
The prayer unheard at length was said,
An hour had passed: the noonday sun
Smote on the features of the dead!

And he who stood the doomed beside,
Calm gauger of the swelling tide
Of mortal agony and fear,
Heeding with curious eye and ear
Whate'er revealed the keen excess
Of man's extremest wretchedness:
And who in that dark anguish saw
An earnest of the victim's fate,
The vengeful terrors of God's law,
The kindlings of Eternal hate,
The first drops of that fiery rain
Which beats the dark red realm of pain,
Did he uplift his earnest cries
Against the crime of Law, which gave
His brother to that fearful grave,
Whereon Hope's moonlight never lies,
And Faith's white blossoms never wave
To the soft breath of Memory's sighs;
Which sent a spirit marred and stained,
By fiends of sin possessed, profaned,
In madness and in blindness stark,
Into the silent, unknown dark?
No, from the wild and shrinking dread,
With which he saw the victim led
Beneath the dark veil which divides
Ever the living from the dead,
And Nature's solemn secret hides,
The man of prayer can only draw
New reasons for his bloody law;
New faith in staying Murder's hand
By murder at that Law's command;
New reverence for the gallows-rope,
As human nature's latest hope;
Last relic of the good old time,
When Power found license for its crime,
And held a writhing world in check
By that fell cord about its neck;
Stifled Sedition's rising shout,
Choked the young breath of Freedom out,
And timely checked the words which sprung
From Heresy's forbidden tongue;
While in its noose of terror bound,
The Church its cherished union found,
Conforming, on the Moslem plan,
The motley-colored mind of man,
Not by the Koran and the Sword,
But by the Bible and the Cord!

VI.

O Thou! at whose rebuke the grave
Back to warm life its sleeper gave,
Beneath whose sad and tearful glance
The cold and changëd countenance
Broke the still horror of its trance,
And, waking, saw with joy above,
A brother's face of tenderest love;
Thou, unto whom the blind and lame,
The sorrowing and the sin-sick came,
And from Thy very garment's hem
Drew life and healing unto them,
The burden of Thy holy faith
Was love and life, not hate and death;
Man's demon ministers of pain,
The fiends of his revenge, were sent
From Thy pure Gospel's element
To their dark home again.
Thy name is Love! What, then, is he,
Who in that name the gallows rears,
An awful altar built to Thee,
With sacrifice of blood and tears?
Oh, once again Thy healing lay
On the blind eyes which knew Thee not,
And let the light of Thy pure day
Melt in upon his darkened thought.
Soften his hard, cold heart, and show
The power which in forbearance lies,
And let him feel that mercy now
Is better than old sacrifice!

VII.

As on the White Sea's charmëd shore,
The Parsee sees his holy hill
With dunnest smoke-clouds curtained o'er,
Yet knows beneath them, evermore,
The low, pale fire is quivering still;
So, underneath its clouds of sin,
The heart of man retaineth yet
Gleams of its holy origin;
And half-quenched stars that never set,
Dim colors of its faded bow,
And early beauty, linger there,
And o'er its wasted desert blow
Faint breathings of its morning air.

Oh, never yet upon the scroll
Of the sin-stained, but priceless soul,
Hath Heaven inscribed 'Despair!'
Cast not the clouded gem away,
Quench not the dim but living ray,—
My brother man, Beware!
With that deep voice which from the skies
Forbade the Patriarch's sacrifice,
God's angel cries, Forbear!

1843.

SONGS OF LABOR.

DEDICATION

Prefixed to the volume of which the group of six poems following this prelude constituted the first portion.

I WOULD the gift I offer here
Might graces from thy favor take,
And, seen through Friendship's atmosphere,
On softened lines and coloring, wear
The unaccustomed light of beauty, for thy sake.

Few leaves of Fancy's spring remain:
But what I have I give to thee,
The o'er-sunned bloom of summer's plain,
And paler flowers, the latter rain
Calls from the westering slope of life's autumnal lea.

Above the fallen groves of green,
Where youth's enchanted forest stood,
Dry root and mossèd trunk between,
A sober after-growth is seen,
As springs the pine where falls the gay-leafed maple wood!

Yet birds will sing, and breezes play
Their leaf-harps in the sombre tree;
And through the bleak and wintry day
It keeps its steady green alway,—
So, even my after-thoughts may have a charm for thee.

Art's perfect forms no moral need,
And beauty is its own excuse;[61]
But for the dull and flowerless weed
Some healing virtue still must plead,
And the rough ore must find its honors in its use.

So haply these, my simple lays
Of homely toil, may serve to show
The orchard bloom and tasselled maize
That skirt and gladden duty's ways,
The unsung beauty hid life's common things below.

Haply from them the toiler, bent
Above his forge or plough, may gain
A manlier spirit of content,
And feel that life is wisest spent
Where the strong working hand makes strong the working brain.

The doom which to the guilty pair
Without the walls of Eden came,
Transforming sinless ease to care
And rugged toil, no more shall bear
The burden of old crime, or mark of primal shame.

A blessing now, a curse no more;
Since He, whose name we breathe with awe,
The coarse mechanic vesture wore,
A poor man toiling with the poor,
In labor, as in prayer, fulfilling the same law.

1850.

THE SHOEMAKERS.

Ho! workers of the old time styled
The Gentle Craft of Leather!
Young brothers of the ancient guild,
Stand forth once more together!
Call out again your long array,
In the olden merry manner!
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,
Fling out your blazoned banner!

Rap, rap! upon the well-worn stone
How falls the polished hammer!
Rap, rap! the measured sound has grown
A quick and merry clamor.
Now shape the sole! now deftly curl
The glossy vamp around it,
And bless the while the bright-eyed girl
Whose gentle fingers bound it!

For you, along the Spanish main
A hundred keels are ploughing;
For you, the Indian on the plain
His lasso-coil is throwing;
For you, deep glens with hemlock dark
The woodman's fire is lighting;
For you, upon the oak's gray bark,
The woodman's axe is smiting.

For you, from Carolina's pine
The rosin-gum is stealing;
For you, the dark-eyed Florentine
Her silken skein is reeling;
For you, the dizzy goatherd roams
His rugged Alpine ledges;
For you, round all her shepherd homes,
Bloom England's thorny hedges.

The foremost still, by day or night,
On moated mound or heather,
Where'er the need of trampled right
Brought toiling men together;
Where the free burghers from the wall
Defied the mail-clad master,
Than yours, at Freedom's trumpet-call,
No craftsmen rallied faster.

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,
Ye heed no idle scorner;
Free hands and hearts are still your pride,
And duty done, your honor.
Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,
The jury Time empanels,
And leave to truth each noble name
Which glorifies your annals.

Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,
In strong and hearty German;
And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,
And patriot fame of Sherman;
Still from his book, a mystic seer,
The soul of Behmen teaches,
And England's priestcraft shakes to hear
Of Fox's leathern breeches.

The foot is yours; where'er it falls,
It treads your well-wrought leather,
On earthen floor, in marble halls,
On carpet, or on heather.

Still there the sweetest charm is found
Of matron grace or vestal's,
As Hebe's foot bore nectar round
Among the old celestials!

Rap, rap!—your stout and bluff brogan,
With footsteps slow and weary,
May wander where the sky's blue span
Shuts down upon the prairie.
On Beauty's foot your slippers glance,
By Saratoga's fountains,
Or twinkle down the summer dance
Beneath the Crystal Mountains!

The red brick to the mason's hand,
The brown earth to the tiller's,
The shoe in yours shall wealth command,
Like fairy Cinderella's!
As they who shunned the household maid
Beheld the crown upon her,
So all shall see your toil repaid
With hearth and home and honor.

Then let the toast be freely quaffed,
In water cool and brimming,—
'All honor to the good old Craft,
Its merry men and women!'
Call out again your long array,
In the old time's pleasant manner:
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,
Fling out his blazoned banner!

1845.

THE FISHERMEN.

Hurrah! the seaward breezes
Sweep down the bay amain;
Heave up, my lads, the anchor!
Run up the sail again!
Leave to the lubber landsmen
The rail-car and the steed;
The stars of heaven shall guide us,
The breath of heaven shall speed.

From the hill-top looks the steeple,
And the lighthouse from the sand;
And the scattered pines are waving
Their farewell from the land.
One glance, my lads, behind us,
For the homes we leave one sigh,
Ere we take the change and chances
Of the ocean and the sky.

Now, brothers, for the icebergs
Of frozen Labrador,
Floating spectral in the moonshine,
Along the low, black shore!
Where like snow the gannet's feathers
On Brador's rocks are shed,
And the noisy murr are flying,
Like black scuds, overhead;

Where in mist the rock is hiding,
And the sharp reef lurks below,
And the white squall smites in summer,
And the autumn tempests blow;
Where, through gray and rolling vapor,
From evening unto morn,
A thousand boats are hailing,
Horn answering unto horn.

Hurrah! for the Red Island,
With the white cross on its crown!
Hurrah! for Meccatina,
And its mountains bare and brown!
Where the Caribou's tall antlers
O'er the dwarf-wood freely toss,
And the footstep of the Mickmack
Has no sound upon the moss.

There we'll drop our lines, and gather
Old Ocean's treasures in,
Where'er the mottled mackerel
Turns up a steel-dark fin.
The sea's our field of harvest,
Its scaly tribes our grain;
We'll reap the teeming waters
As at home they reap the plain!

Our wet hands spread the carpet,
And light the hearth of home;
From our fish, as in the old time,
The silver coin shall come.
As the demon fled the chamber
Where the fish of Tobit lay,
So ours from all our dwellings
Shall frighten Want away.

Though the mist upon our jackets
In the bitter air congeals,
And our lines wind stiff and slowly
From off the frozen reels;
Though the fog be dark around us,
And the storm blow high and loud,
We will whistle down the wild wind,
And laugh beneath the cloud!

In the darkness as in daylight,
On the water as on land,
God's eye is looking on us,
And beneath us is His hand!
Death will find us soon or later,
On the deck or in the cot;
And we cannot meet him better
Than in working out our lot.

Hurrah! hurrah! the west-wind
Comes freshening down the bay,
The rising sails are filling;
Give way, my lads, give way!
Leave the coward landsman clinging
To the dull earth, like a weed;
The stars of heaven shall guide us,
The breath of heaven shall speed!

1845.

THE LUMBERMEN.

Wildly round our woodland quarters
Sad-voiced Autumn grieves;
Thickly down these swelling waters
Float his fallen leaves.
Through the tall and naked timber,
Column-like and old,
Gleam the sunsets of November,
From their skies of gold.

O'er us, to the southland heading,
Screams the gray wild-goose;
On the night-frost sounds the treading
Of the brindled moose.
Noiseless creeping, while we're sleeping,
Frost his task-work plies;
Soon, his icy bridges heaping,
Shall our log-piles rise.

When, with sounds of smothered thunder,
On some night of rain,
Lake and river break asunder
Winter's weakened chain,
Down the wild March flood shall bear them
To the saw-mill's wheel,
Or where Steam, the slave, shall tear them
With his teeth of steel.

Be it starlight, be it moonlight,
In these vales below,
When the earliest beams of sunlight
Streak the mountain's snow,
Crisps the hoar-frost, keen and early,
To our hurrying feet,
And the forest echoes clearly
All our blows repeat.

Where the crystal Ambijejis
Stretches broad and clear,
And Millnoket's pine-black ridges
Hide the browsing deer:
Where, through lakes and wide morasses,
Or through rocky walls,
Swift and strong, Penobscot passes
White with foamy falls;

Where, through clouds, are glimpses given
Of Katahdin's sides,—
Rock and forest piled to heaven,
Torn and ploughed by slides!
Far below, the Indian trapping,
In the sunshine warm;
Far above, the snow-cloud wrapping
Half the peak in storm!

Where are mossy carpets better
Than the Persian weaves,
And than Eastern perfumes sweeter
Seem the fading leaves;
And a music wild and solemn,
From the pine-tree's height,
Rolls its vast and sea-like volume
On the wind of night;

Make we here our camp of winter;
And, through sleet and snow,
Pitchy knot and beechen splinter
On our hearth shall glow.
Here, with mirth to lighten duty,
We shall lack alone
Woman's smile and girlhood's beauty,
Childhood's lisping tone.

But their hearth is brighter burning
For our toil to-day;
And the welcome of returning
Shall our loss repay,

When, like seamen from the waters,
From the woods we come,
Greeting sisters, wives, and daughters,
Angels of our home!

Not for us the measured ringing
From the village spire,
Not for us the Sabbath singing
Of the sweet-voiced choir:
Ours the old, majestic temple,
Where God's brightness shines
Down the dome so grand and ample,
Propped by lofty pines!

Through each branch-enwoven skylight,
Speaks He in the breeze,
As of old beneath the twilight
Of lost Eden's trees!
For His ear, the inward feeling
Needs no outward tongue;
He can see the spirit kneeling
While the axe is swung.

Heeding truth alone, and turning
From the false and dim,
Lamp of toil or altar burning
Are alike to Him.
Strike then, comrades! Trade is waiting
On our rugged toil;
Far ships waiting for the freighting
Of our woodland spoil!

Ships whose traffic links these highlands,
Bleak and cold, of ours,
With the citron-planted islands
Of a clime of flowers;
To our frosts the tribute bringing
Of eternal heats;
In our lap of winter flinging
Tropic fruits and sweets.

Cheerly, on the axe of labor,
Let the sunbeams dance,
Better than the flash of sabre
Or the gleam of lance!
Strike! With every blow is given
Freer sun and sky,
And the long-hid earth to heaven
Looks, with wondering eye!

Loud behind us grow the murmurs
Of the age to come;
Clang of smiths, and tread of farmers,
Bearing harvest home!
Here her virgin lap with treasures
Shall the green earth fill;
Waving wheat and golden maize-ears
Crown each beechen hill.

Keep who will the city's alleys,
Take the smooth-shorn plain;
Give to us the cedarn valleys,
Rocks and hills of Maine!
In our North-land, wild and woody,
Let us still have part:
Rugged nurse and mother sturdy,
Hold us to thy heart!

Oh, our free hearts beat the warmer
For thy breath of snow;
And our tread is all the firmer
For thy rocks below.
Freedom, hand in hand with labor,
Walketh strong and brave;
On the forehead of his neighbor
No man writeth Slave!

Lo, the day breaks! old Katahdin's
Pine-trees show its fires,
While from these dim forest gardens
Rise their blackened spires.
Up, my comrades! up and doing!
Manhood's rugged play
Still renewing, bravely hewing
Through the world our way!

1845.

THE SHIP-BUILDERS.

The sky is ruddy in the east,
The earth is gray below,
And, spectral in the river-mist,
The ship's white timbers show.
Then let the sounds of measured stroke
And grating saw begin;
The broad-axe to the gnarlëd oak,
The mallet to the pin!

Hark! roars the bellows, blast on blast,
The sooty smithy jars,
And fire-sparks, rising far and fast,
Are fading with the stars.
All day for us the smith shall stand
Beside that flashing forge;
All day for us his heavy hand
The groaning anvil scourge.

From far-off hills, the panting team
For us is toiling near;
For us the raftsmen down the stream
Their island barges steer.
Rings out for us the axe-man's stroke
In forests old and still;
For us the century-circled oak
Falls crashing down his hill.

Up! up! in nobler toil than ours
No craftsmen bear a part:
We make of Nature's giant powers
The slaves of human Art.
Lay rib to rib and beam to beam,
And drive the treenails free;
Nor faithless joint nor yawning seam
Shall tempt the searching sea!

Where'er the keel of our good ship
The sea's rough field shall plough;
Where'er her tossing spars shall drip
With salt-spray caught below;
That ship must heed her master's beck,
Her helm obey his hand,
And seamen tread her reeling deck
As if they trod the land.

Her oaken ribs the vulture-beak
Of Northern ice may peel;
The sunken rock and coral peak
May grate along her keel;
And know we well the painted shell
We give to wind and wave,
Must float, the sailor's citadel,
Or sink, the sailor's grave!

Ho! strike away the bars and blocks,
And set the good ship free!
Why lingers on these dusty rocks
The young bride of the sea?
Look! how she moves adown the grooves,
In graceful beauty now!
How lowly on the breast she loves
Sinks down her virgin prow!

God bless her! wheresoe'er the breeze
Her snowy wing shall fan,
Aside the frozen Hebrides,
Or sultry Hindostan!
Where'er, in mart or on the main,
With peaceful flag unfurled,
She helps to wind the silken chain
Of commerce round the world!

Speed on the ship! But let her bear
No merchandise of sin,
No groaning cargo of despair
Her roomy hold within;
No Lethean drug for Eastern lands,
Nor poison-draught for ours;
But honest fruits of toiling hands
And Nature's sun and showers.

Be hers the Prairie's golden grain,
The Desert's golden sand,
The clustered fruits of sunny Spain,
The spice of Morning-land!
Her pathway on the open main
May blessings follow free,
And glad hearts welcome back again
Her white sails from the sea!

1846.

THE DROVERS.

Through heat and cold, and shower and sun,
Still onward cheerly driving!
There's life alone in duty done,
And rest alone in striving.
But see! the day is closing cool,
The woods are dim before us;
The white fog of the wayside pool
Is creeping slowly o'er us.

The night is falling, comrades mine,
Our footsore beasts are weary,
And through yon elms the tavern sign
Looks out upon us cheery.
The landlord beckons from his door,
His beechen fire is glowing;
These ample barns, with feed in store,
Are filled to overflowing.

From many a valley frowned across
By brows of rugged mountains;
From hillsides where, through spongy moss,
Gush out the river fountains;
From quiet farm-fields, green and low,
And bright with blooming clover;
From vales of corn the wandering crow
No richer hovers over,—

Day after day our way has been
O'er many a hill and hollow;
By lake and stream, by wood and glen,
Our stately drove we follow.
Through dust-clouds rising thick and dun,
As smoke of battle o'er us,
Their white horns glisten in the sun,
Like plumes and crests before us.

We see them slowly climb the hill,
As slow behind it sinking;
Or, thronging close, from roadside rill,
Or sunny lakelet, drinking.
Now crowding in the narrow road,
In thick and struggling masses,
They glare upon the teamster's load,
Or rattling coach that passes.

Anon, with toss of horn and tail,
And paw of hoof, and bellow,
They leap some farmer's broken pale,
O'er meadow-close or fallow.
Forth comes the startled goodman; forth
Wife, children, house-dog, sally,
Till once more on their dusty path
The baffled truants rally.

We drive no starvelings, scraggy grown,
Loose-legged, and ribbed and bony,
Like those who grind their noses down
On pastures bare and stony,—
Lank oxen, rough as Indian dogs,
And cows too lean for shadows,
Disputing feebly with the frogs
The crop of saw-grass meadows!

In our good drove, so sleek and fair,
No bones of leanness rattle;
No tottering hide-bound ghosts are there,
Or Pharaoh's evil cattle.

Each stately beeve bespeaks the hand
That fed him unrepining;
The fatness of a goodly land
In each dun hide is shining.

We've sought them where, in warmest nooks,
The freshest feed is growing,
By sweetest springs and clearest brooks
Through honeysuckle flowing;
Wherever hillsides, sloping south,
Are bright with early grasses,
Or, tracking green the lowland's drouth,
The mountain streamlet passes.

But now the day is closing cool,
The woods are dim before us,
The white fog of the wayside pool
Is creeping slowly o'er us.
The cricket to the frog's bassoon
His shrillest time is keeping;
The sickle of yon setting moon
The meadow-mist is reaping.

The night is falling, comrades mine,
Our footsore beasts are weary,
And through yon elms the tavern sign
Looks out upon us cheery.
To-morrow, eastward with our charge
We'll go to meet the dawning,
Ere yet the pines of Kearsarge
Have seen the sun of morning.

When snow-flakes o'er the frozen earth,
Instead of birds, are flitting;
When children throng the glowing hearth,
And quiet wives are knitting;
While in the fire-light strong and clear
Young eyes of pleasure glisten,
To tales of all we see and hear
The ears of home shall listen.

By many a Northern lake and hill,
From many a mountain pasture,
Shall Fancy play the Drover still,
And speed the long night faster.
Then let us on, through shower and sun,
And heat and cold, be driving;
There's life alone in duty done,
And rest alone in striving.

1847.

THE HUSKERS.

It was late in mild October, and the long autumnal rain
Had left the summer harvest-fields all green with grass again;
The first sharp frosts had fallen, leaving all the woodlands gay
With the hues of summer's rainbow, or the meadow-flowers of May.

Through a thin, dry mist, that morning, the sun rose broad and red,
At first a rayless disk of fire, he brightened as he sped;
Yet even his noontide glory fell chastened and subdued,
On the cornfields and the orchards and softly pictured wood.

And all that quiet afternoon, slow sloping to the night,
He wove with golden shuttle the haze with yellow light;
Slanting through the painted beeches, he glorified the hill;
And, beneath it, pond and meadow lay brighter, greener still.

And shouting boys in woodland haunts caught glimpses of that sky,
Flecked by the many-tinted leaves, and laughed, they knew not why;
And school-girls, gay with aster-flowers, beside the meadow brooks,
Mingled the glow of autumn with the sunshine of sweet looks.

From spire and barn looked westerly the patient weathercocks;
But even the birches on the hill stood motionless as rocks.
No sound was in the woodlands, save the squirrel's dropping shell,
And the yellow leaves among the boughs, low rustling as they fell.

The summer grains were harvested; the stubble-fields lay dry,
Where June winds rolled, in light and shade, the pale green waves of rye;
But still, on gentle hill-slopes, in valleys fringed with wood,
Ungathered, bleaching in the sun, the heavy corn crop stood.

Bent low, by autumn's wind and rain, through husks that, dry and sere,
Unfolded from their ripened charge, shone out the yellow ear;
Beneath, the turnip lay concealed, in many a verdant fold,
And glistened in the slanting light the pumpkin's sphere of gold.

There wrought the busy harvesters; and many a creaking wain
Bore slowly to the long barn-floor its load of husk and grain;
Till broad and red, as when he rose, the sun sank down, at last,
And like a merry guest's farewell, the day in brightness passed.

And lo! as through the western pines, on meadow, stream, and pond,
Flamed the red radiance of a sky, set all afire beyond,
Slowly o'er the eastern sea-bluffs a milder glory shone,
And the sunset and the moonrise were mingled into one!

As thus into the quiet night the twilight lapsed away,
And deeper in the brightening moon the tranquil shadows lay;
From many a brown old farm-house, and hamlet without name,
Their milking and their home-tasks done, the merry huskers came.

Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from pitchforks in the mow,
Shone dimly down the lanterns on the pleasant scene below;
The growing pile of husks behind, the golden ears before,
And laughing eyes and busy hands and brown cheeks glimmering o'er.

Half hidden, in a quiet nook, serene of look and heart,
Talking their old times over, the old men sat apart;
While up and down the unhusked pile, or nestling in its shade,
At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout, the happy children played.

Urged by the good host's daughter, a maiden young and fair,
Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes and pride of soft brown hair,
The master of the village school, sleek of hair and smooth of tongue,
To the quaint tune of some old psalm, a husking-ballad sung.

THE CORN-SONG.

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard!
Heap high the golden corn!
No richer gift has Autumn poured
From out her lavish horn!

Let other lands, exulting, glean
The apple from the pine,
The orange from its glossy green,
The cluster from the vine;

We better love the hardy gift
Our rugged vales bestow,
To cheer us when the storm shall drift
Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers
Our ploughs their furrows made,
While on the hills the sun and showers
Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain
Beneath the sun of May,
And frightened from our sprouting grain
The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June
Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon
Its soft and yellow hair.

And now, with autumn's moonlit eves,
Its harvest-time has come,
We pluck away the frosted leaves,
And bear the treasure home.

There, when the snows about us drift,
And winter winds are cold,
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk
Around their costly board;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
By homespun beauty poured!

Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth
Sends up its smoky curls,
Who will not thank the kindly earth,
And bless our farmer girls!

Then shame on all the proud and vain,
Whose folly laughs to scorn
The blessing of our hardy grain,
Our wealth of golden corn!

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
The wheat-field to the fly:

But let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod;
Still let us, for His golden corn,
Send up our thanks to God!

1847.

THE REFORMER.

All grim and soiled and brown with tan,
I saw a Strong One, in his wrath,
Smiting the godless shrines of man
Along his path.

The Church, beneath her trembling dome,
Essayed in vain her ghostly charm:
Wealth shook within his gilded home
With strange alarm.

Fraud from his secret chambers fled
Before the sunlight bursting in:
Sloth drew her pillow o'er her head
To drown the din.

'Spare,' Art implored, 'yon holy pile;
That grand, old, time-worn turret spare;'
Meek Reverence, kneeling in the aisle,
Cried out, 'Forbear!'

Gray-bearded Use, who, deaf and blind,
Groped for his old accustomed stone,
Leaned on his staff, and wept to find
His seat o'erthrown.

Young Romance raised his dreamy eyes,
O'erhung with paly locks of gold,—
'Why smite,' he asked in sad surprise,
'The fair, the old?'

Yet louder rang the Strong One's stroke,
Yet nearer flashed his axe's gleam;
Shuddering and sick of heart I woke,
As from a dream.

I looked: aside the dust-cloud rolled,
The Waster seemed the Builder too;
Upspringing from the ruined Old
I saw the New.

'T was but the ruin of the bad,—
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whate'er of good the old time had
Was living still.

Calm grew the brows of him I feared;
The frown which awed me passed away,
And left behind a smile which cheered
Like breaking day.

The grain grew green on battle-plains,
O'er swarded war-mounds grazed the cow;
The slave stood forging from his chains
The spade and plough.

Where frowned the fort, pavilions gay
And cottage windows, flower-entwined,
Looked out upon the peaceful bay
And hills behind.

Through vine-wreathed cups with wine once red,
The lights on brimming crystal fell,
Drawn, sparkling, from the rivulet head
And mossy well.

Through prison walls, like Heaven-sent hope,
Fresh breezes blew, and sunbeams strayed,
And with the idle gallows-rope
The young child played.

Where the doomed victim in his cell
Had counted o'er the weary hours,
Glad school-girls, answering to the bell,
Came crowned with flowers.

Grown wiser for the lesson given,
I fear no longer, for I know
That, where the share is deepest driven,
The best fruits grow.

The outworn rite, the old abuse,
The pious fraud transparent grown,
The good held captive in the use
Of wrong alone,—

These wait their doom, from that great law
Which makes the past time serve to-day;
And fresher life the world shall draw
From their decay.

Oh, backward-looking son of time!
The new is old, the old is new,
The cycle of a change sublime
Still sweeping through.

So wisely taught the Indian seer;
Destroying Seva, forming Brahm,
Who wake by turns Earth's love and fear,
Are one, the same.

Idly as thou, in that old day
Thou mournest, did thy sire repine;
So, in his time, thy child grown gray
Shall sigh for thine.

But life shall on and upward go;
Th' eternal step of Progress beats
To that great anthem, calm and slow,
Which God repeats.

Take heart! the Waster builds again,—
A charmëd life old Goodness hath;
The tares may perish, but the grain
Is not for death.

God works in all things; all obey
His first propulsion from the night:
Wake thou and watch! the world is gray
With morning light!

1846.

THE PEACE CONVENTION AT BRUSSELS.

Still in thy streets, O Paris! doth the stain
Of blood defy the cleansing autumn rain;
Still breaks the smoke Messina's ruins through,
And Naples mourns that new Bartholomew,
When squalid beggary, for a dole of bread,
At a crowned murderer's beck of license, fed
The yawning trenches with her noble dead;
Still, doomed Vienna, through thy stately halls
The shell goes crashing and the red shot falls,
And, leagued to crush thee, on the Danube's side,
The bearded Croat and Bosniak spearman ride;
Still in that vale where Himalaya's snow
Melts round the cornfields and the vines below,
The Sikh's hot cannon, answering ball for ball,
Flames in the breach of Moultan's shattered wall;
On Chenab's side the vulture seeks the slain,
And Sutlej paints with blood its banks again.

'What folly, then,' the faithless critic cries,
With sneering lip, and wise world-knowing eyes,
'While fort to fort, and post to post, repeat
The ceaseless challenge of the war-drum's beat,

And round the green earth, to the church-bell's chime,
The morning drum-roll of the camp keeps time,
To dream of peace amidst a world in arms,
Of swords to ploughshares changed by Scriptural charms,
Of nations, drunken with the wine of blood,
Staggering to take the Pledge of Brotherhood,
Like tipplers answering Father Mathew's call;
The sullen Spaniard, and the mad-cap Gaul,
The bull-dog Briton, yielding but with life,
The Yankee swaggering with his bowie-knife,
The Russ, from banquets with the vulture shared,
The blood still dripping from his amber beard,
Quitting their mad Berserker dance to hear
The dull, meek droning of a drab-coat seer;
Leaving the sport of Presidents and Kings,
Where men for dice each titled gambler flings,
To meet alternate on the Seine and Thames,
For tea and gossip, like old country dames!
No! let the cravens plead the weakling's cant,
Let Cobden cipher, and let Vincent rant,
Let Sturge preach peace to democratic throngs,
And Burritt, stammering through his hundred tongues,
Repeat, in all, his ghostly lessons o'er,
Timed to the pauses of the battery's roar;
Check Ban or Kaiser with the barricade
Of "Olive-leaves" and Resolutions made,
Spike guns with pointed Scripture-texts, and hope
To capsize navies with a windy trope:
Still shall the glory and the pomp of War
Along their train the shouting millions draw;
Still dusty Labor to the passing Brave
His cap shall doff, and Beauty's kerchief wave;
Still shall the bard to Valor tune his song,
Still Hero-worship kneel before the Strong;
Rosy and sleek, the sable-gowned divine,
O'er his third bottle of suggestive wine,
To plumed and sworded auditors, shall prove
Their trade accordant with the Law of Love;
And Church for State, and State for Church, shall fight,
And both agree, that 'Might alone is Right!'
Despite of sneers like these, O faithful few,
Who dare to hold God's word and witness true,
Whose clear-eyed faith transcends our evil time,
And o'er the present wilderness of crime
Sees the calm future, with its robes of green,
Its fleece-flecked mountains, and soft streams between,—
Still keep the path which duty bids ye tread,
Though worldly wisdom shake the cautious head;
No truth from Heaven descends upon our sphere,
Without the greeting of the skeptic's sneer;
Denied and mocked at, till its blessings fall,
Common as dew and sunshine, over all.

Then, o'er Earth's war-field, till the strife shall cease,
Like Morven's harpers, sing your song of peace;
As in old fable rang the Thracian's lyre,
Midst howl of fiends and roar of penal fire,
Till the fierce din to pleasing murmurs fell,
And love subdued the maddened heart of hell.

Lend, once again, that holy song a tongue,
Which the glad angels of the Advent sung,
Their cradle-anthem for the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God, and peace unto the earth!
Through the mad discord send that calming word
Which wind and wave on wild Gennesareth heard,
Lift in Christ's name His Cross against the Sword!
Not vain the vision which the prophets saw,
Skirting with green the fiery waste of war,
Through the hot sand-gleam, looming soft and calm
On the sky's rim, the fountain-shading palm.
Still lives for Earth, which fiends so long have trod,
The great hope resting on the truth of God,—
Evil shall cease and Violence pass away,
And the tired world breathe free through a long Sabbath day.

11th mo., 1848.

THE PRISONER FOR DEBT.

Before the law authorizing imprisonment for debt had been abolished in Massachusetts, a revolutionary pensioner was confined in Charlestown jail for a debt of fourteen dollars, and on the 4th of July was seen waving a handkerchief from the bars of his cell in honor of the day.

Look on him! through his dungeon grate,
Feebly and cold, the morning light
Comes stealing round him, dim and late,
As if it loathed the sight.
Reclining on his strawy bed,
His hand upholds his drooping head;
His bloodless cheek is seamed and hard,
Unshorn his gray, neglected beard;
And o'er his bony fingers flow
His long, dishevelled locks of snow.

No grateful fire before him glows,
And yet the winter's breath is chill;
And o'er his half-clad person goes
The frequent ague thrill!
Silent, save ever and anon,
A sound, half murmur and half groan,
Forces apart the painful grip
Of the old sufferer's bearded lip;
Oh, sad and crushing is the fate
Of old age chained and desolate!

Just God! why lies that old man there?
A murderer shares his prison bed,
Whose eyeballs, through his horrid hair,
Gleam on him, fierce and red;
And the rude oath and heartless jeer
Fall ever on his loathing ear,
And, or in wakefulness or sleep,
Nerve, flesh, and pulses thrill and creep
Whene'er that ruffian's tossing limb,
Crimson with murder, touches him!

What has the gray-haired prisoner done?
Has murder stained his hands with gore?
Not so; his crime 's a fouler one;
God made the old man poor!
For this he shares a felon's cell,
The fittest earthly type of hell!
For this, the boon for which he poured
His young blood on the invader's sword,
And counted light the fearful cost,
His blood-gained liberty is lost!

And so, for such a place of rest,
Old prisoner, dropped thy blood as rain
On Concord's field, and Bunker's crest,
And Saratoga's plain?
Look forth, thou man of many scars,
Through thy dim dungeon's iron bars;
It must be joy, in sooth, to see
Yon monument upreared to thee;
Piled granite and a prison cell,—
The land repays thy service well!

Go, ring the bells and fire the guns,
And fling the starry banner out;
Shout 'Freedom!' till your lisping ones
Give back their cradle-shout;
Let boastful eloquence declaim
Of honor, liberty, and fame;
Still let the poet's strain be heard,
With glory for each second word,
And everything with breath agree
To praise 'our glorious liberty'!

But when the patron cannon jars
That prison's cold and gloomy wall,
And through its grates the stripes and stars
Rise on the wind, and fall,
Think ye that prisoner's aged ear
Rejoices in the general cheer?
Think ye his dim and failing eye
Is kindled at your pageantry?
Sorrowing of soul, and chained of limb,
What is your carnival to him?

Down with the law that binds him thus!
Unworthy freemen, let it find
No refuge from the withering curse
Of God and human-kind!
Open the prison's living tomb,
And usher from its brooding gloom
The victims of your savage code
To the free sun and air of God;
No longer dare as crime to brand
The chastening of the Almighty's hand.

1835.

THE CHRISTIAN TOURISTS.

The reader of the biography of William Allen, the philanthropic associate of Clarkson and Romilly, cannot fail to admire his simple and beautiful record of a tour through Europe, in the years 1818 and 1819, in the company of his American friend, Stephen Grellett.

No aimless wanderers, by the fiend Unrest
Goaded from shore to shore;
No schoolmen, turning, in their classic quest,
The leaves of empire o'er.
Simple of faith, and bearing in their hearts
The love of man and God,
Isles of old song, the Moslem's ancient marts,
And Scythia's steppes, they trod.

Where the long shadows of the fir and pine
In the night sun are cast,
And the deep heart of many a Norland mine
Quakes at each riving blast;
Where, in barbaric grandeur, Moskwa stands,
A baptized Scythian queen,
With Europe's arts and Asia's jewelled hands,
The North and East between!

Where still, through vales of Grecian fable, stray
The classic forms of yore,
And beauty smiles, new risen from the spray,
And Dian weeps once more;
Where every tongue in Smyrna's mart resounds;
And Stamboul from the sea
Lifts her tall minarets over burial-grounds
Black with the cypress-tree!

From Malta's temples to the gates of Rome,
Following the track of Paul,
And where the Alps gird round the Switzer's home
Their vast, eternal wall;
They paused not by the ruins of old time,
They scanned no pictures rare,
Nor lingered where the snow-locked mountains climb
The cold abyss of air!

But unto prisons, where men lay in chains,
To haunts where Hunger pined,
To kings and courts forgetful of the pains
And wants of human-kind,
Scattering sweet words, and quiet deeds of good,
Along their way, like flowers,
Or pleading, as Christ's freemen only could,
With princes and with powers;

Their single aim the purpose to fulfil
Of Truth, from day to day,
Simply obedient to its guiding will,
They held their pilgrim way.
Yet dream not, hence, the beautiful and old
Were wasted on their sight,
Who in the school of Christ had learned to hold
All outward things aright.

Not less to them the breath of vineyards blown
From off the Cyprian shore,
Not less for them the Alps in sunset shone,
That man they valued more.
A life of beauty lends to all it sees
The beauty of its thought;
And fairest forms and sweetest harmonies
Make glad its way, unsought.

In sweet accordancy of praise and love,
The singing waters run;
And sunset mountains wear in light above
The smile of duty done;
Sure stands the promise,—ever to the meek
A heritage is given;
Nor lose they Earth who, single-hearted, seek
The righteousness of Heaven!

1849.

THE MEN OF OLD.

Well speed thy mission, bold Iconoclast!
Yet all unworthy of its trust thou art,
If, with dry eye, and cold, unloving heart,
Thou tread'st the solemn Pantheon of the Past,
By the great Future's dazzling hope made blind
To all the beauty, power, and truth behind.
Not without reverent awe shouldst thou put by
The cypress branches and the amaranth blooms,
Where, with clasped hands of prayer, upon their tombs
The effigies of old confessors lie,
God's witnesses; the voices of His will,
Heard in the slow march of the centuries still!
Such were the men at whose rebuking frown,
Dark with God's wrath, the tyrant's knee went down;
Such from the terrors of the guilty drew
The vassal's freedom and the poor man's due.
St. Anselm (may he rest forevermore
In Heaven's sweet peace!) forbade, of old, the sale
Of men as slaves, and from the sacred pale
Hurled the Northumbrian buyers of the poor.
To ransom souls from bonds and evil fate
St. Ambrose melted down the sacred plate,—
Image of saint, the chalice, and the pix,
Crosses of gold, and silver candlesticks.
'Man is worth more than temples!' he replied
To such as came his holy work to chide.
And brave Cesarius, stripping altars bare,
And coining from the Abbey's golden hoard
The captive's freedom, answered to the prayer
Or threat of those whose fierce zeal for the Lord
Stifled their love of man,—'An earthen dish
The last sad supper of the Master bore:
Most miserable sinners! do ye wish
More than your Lord, and grudge His dying poor
What your own pride and not His need requires?
Souls, than these shining gauds, He values more:
Mercy, not sacrifice, His heart desires!'
O faithful worthies! resting far behind
In your dark ages, since ye fell asleep,
Much has been done for truth and humankind;
Shadows are scattered wherein ye groped blind;
Man claims his birthright, freer pulses leap
Through peoples driven in your day like sheep;
Yet, like your own, our age's sphere of light,
Though widening still, is walled around by night;
With slow, reluctant eye, the Church has read,
Skeptic at heart, the lessons of its Head;

Counting, too oft, its living members less
Than the wall's garnish and the pulpit's dress;
World-moving zeal, with power to bless and feed
Life's fainting pilgrims, to their utter need,
Instead of bread, holds out the stone of creed;
Sect builds and worships where its wealth and pride
And vanity stand shrined and deified,
Careless that in the shadow of its walls
God's living temple into ruin falls.
We need, methinks, the prophet-hero still,
Saints true of life, and martyrs strong of will,
To tread the land, even now, as Xavier trod
The streets of Goa, barefoot, with his bell,
Proclaiming freedom in the name of God,
And startling tyrants with the fear of hell!
Soft words, smooth prophecies, are doubtless well;
But to rebuke the age's popular crime,
We need the souls of fire, the hearts of that old time!

1849.

TO PIUS IX.

The writer of these lines is no enemy of Catholics. He has, on more than one occasion, exposed himself to the censures of his Protestant brethren, by his strenuous endeavors to procure indemnification for the owners of the convent destroyed near Boston. He defended the cause of the Irish patriots long before it had become popular in this country; and he was one of the first to urge the most liberal aid to the suffering and starving population of the Catholic island. The severity of his language finds its ample apology in the reluctant confession of one of the most eminent Romish priests, the eloquent and devoted Father Ventura.

The cannon's brazen lips are cold;
No red shell blazes down the air;
And street and tower, and temple old,
Are silent as despair.

The Lombard stands no more at bay,
Rome's fresh young life has bled in vain;
The ravens scattered by the day
Come back with night again.

Now, while the fratricides of France
Are treading on the neck of Rome,
Hider at Gaeta, seize thy chance!
Coward and cruel, come!

Creep now from Naples' bloody skirt;
Thy mummer's part was acted well,
While Rome, with steel and fire begirt,
Before thy crusade fell!

Her death-groans answered to thy prayer;
Thy chant, the drum and bugle-call;
Thy lights, the burning villa's glare;
Thy beads, the shell and ball!

Let Austria clear thy way, with hands
Foul from Ancona's cruel sack,
And Naples, with his dastard bands
Of murderers, lead thee back!

Rome's lips are dumb; the orphan's wail,
The mother's shriek, thou mayst not hear
Above the faithless Frenchman's hail,
The unsexed shaveling's cheer!

Go, bind on Rome her cast-off weight,
The double curse of crook and crown,
Though woman's scorn and manhood's hate
From wall and roof flash down!

Nor heed those blood-stains on the wall,
Not Tiber's flood can wash away,
Where, in thy stately Quirinal,
Thy mangled victims lay!

Let the world murmur; let its cry
Of horror and disgust be heard;
Truth stands alone; thy coward lie
Is backed by lance and sword!

The cannon of St. Angelo,
And chanting priest and clanging bell,
And beat of drum and bugle blow,
Shall greet thy coming well!

Let lips of iron and tongues of slaves
Fit welcome give thee; for her part,
Rome, frowning o'er her new-made graves,
Shall curse thee from her heart!

No wreaths of sad Campagna's flowers
Shall childhood in thy pathway fling;
No garlands from their ravaged bowers
Shall Terni's maidens bring;

But, hateful as that tyrant old,
The mocking witness of his crime,
In thee shall loathing eyes behold
The Nero of our time!

Stand where Rome's blood was freest shed,
Mock Heaven with impious thanks, and call
Its curses on the patriot dead,
Its blessings on the Gaul!

Or sit upon thy throne of lies,
A poor, mean idol, blood-besmeared,
Whom even its worshippers despise,
Unhonored, unrevered!

Yet, Scandal of the World! from thee
One needful truth mankind shall learn:
That kings and priests to Liberty
And God are false in turn.

Earth wearies of them; and the long
Meek sufferance of the Heavens doth fail:
Woe for weak tyrants, when the strong
Wake, struggle, and prevail!

Not vainly Roman hearts have bled
To feed the Crosier and the Crown,
If, roused thereby, the world shall tread
The twin-born vampires down!

1849.

CALEF IN BOSTON.

1692.

In the solemn days of old,
Two men met in Boston town,
One a tradesman frank and bold,
One a preacher of renown.

Cried the last, in bitter tone:
'Poisoner of the wells of truth!
Satan's hireling, thou hast sown
With his tares the heart of youth!'

Spake the simple tradesman then,
'God be judge 'twixt thee and me;
All thou knowest of truth hath been
Once a lie to men like thee.

'Falsehoods which we spurn to-day
Were the truths of long ago;
Let the dead boughs fall away,
Fresher shall the living grow.

'God is good and God is light,
In this faith I rest secure;
Evil can but serve the right,
Over all shall love endure.

'Of your spectral puppet play
I have traced the cunning wires;
Come what will, I needs must say,
God is true, and ye are liars.'

When the thought of man is free,
Error fears its lightest tones;
So the priest cried, 'Sadducee!'
And the people took up stones.

In the ancient burying-ground,
Side by side the twain now lie;
One with humble grassy mound,
One with marbles pale and high.

But the Lord hath blest the seed
Which that tradesman scattered then,
And the preacher's spectral creed
Chills no more the blood of men.

Let us trust, to one is known
Perfect love which casts out fear,
While the other's joys atone
For the wrong he suffered here.

1849.

OUR STATE.

[Originally entitled *Dedication of a Schoolhouse.* It was written for the dedication services of a new school building in Newbury, Mass.]

The South-land boasts its teeming cane,
The prairied West its heavy grain,
And sunset's radiant gates unfold
On rising marts and sands of gold!

Rough, bleak, and hard, our little State
Is scant of soil, of limits strait;
Her yellow sands are sands alone,
Her only mines are ice and stone!

From Autumn frost to April rain,
Too long her winter woods complain;
From budding flower to falling leaf,
Her summer time is all too brief.

Yet, on her rocks, and on her sands,
And wintry hills, the school-house stands,
And what her rugged soil denies,
The harvest of the mind supplies.

The riches of the Commonwealth
Are free, strong minds, and hearts of health;
And more to her than gold or grain,
The cunning hand and cultured brain.

For well she keeps her ancient stock,
The stubborn strength of Pilgrim Rock;
And still maintains, with milder laws,
And clearer light, the Good Old Cause!

Nor heeds the skeptic's puny hands,
While near her school the church-spire stands;
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule,
While near her church-spire stands the school.

1849.

THE PRISONERS OF NAPLES.

I HAVE been thinking of the victims bound
In Naples, dying for the lack of air
And sunshine, in their close, damp cells of pain,
Where hope is not, and innocence in vain
Appeals against the torture and the chain!
Unfortunates! whose crime it was to share
Our common love of freedom, and to dare,
In its behalf, Rome's harlot triple-crowned,
And her base pander, the most hateful thing
Who upon Christian or on Pagan ground
Makes vile the old heroic name of king.
O God most merciful! Father just and kind!
Whom man hath bound let Thy right hand unbind.
Or, if Thy purposes of good behind
Their ills lie hidden, let the sufferers find
Strong consolations; leave them not to doubt
Thy providential care, nor yet without
The hope which all Thy attributes inspire,
That not in vain the martyr's robe of fire
Is worn, nor the sad prisoner's fretting chain;
Since all who suffer for Thy truth send forth,
Electrical, with every throb of pain,
Unquenchable sparks, Thy own baptismal rain
Of fire and spirit over all the earth,
Making the dead in slavery live again.
Let this great hope be with them, as they lie
Shut from the light, the greenness, and the sky;
From the cool waters and the pleasant breeze,
The smell of flowers, and shade of summer trees;
Bound with the felon lepers, whom disease
And sins abhorred make loathsome; let them share
Pellico's faith, Foresti's strength to bear
Years of unutterable torment, stern and still,
As the chained Titan victor through his will!
Comfort them with Thy future; let them see
The day-dawn of Italian liberty;
For that, with all good things, is hid with Thee,
And, perfect in Thy thought, awaits its time to be!

I, who have spoken for freedom at the cost
Of some weak friendships, or some paltry prize

Of name or place, and more than I have lost
Have gained in wider reach of sympathies,
And free communion with the good and wise;
May God forbid that I should ever boast
Such easy self-denial, or repine
That the strong pulse of health no more is mine;
That, overworn at noonday, I must yield
To other hands the gleaning of the field;
A tired on-looker through the day's decline.
For blest beyond deserving still, and knowing
That kindly Providence its care is showing
In the withdrawal as in the bestowing,
Scarcely I dare for more or less to pray.
Beautiful yet for me this autumn day
Melts on its sunset hills; and, far away,
For me the Ocean lifts its solemn psalm,
To me the pine-woods whisper; and for me
Yon river, winding through its vales of calm,
By greenest banks, with asters purple-starred,
And gentian bloom and golden-rod made gay,
Flows down in silent gladness to the sea,
Like a pure spirit to its great reward!

Nor lack I friends, long-tried and near and dear,
Whose love is round me like this atmosphere,
Warm, soft, and golden. For such gifts to me
What shall I render, O my God, to Thee?
Let me not dwell upon my lighter share
Of pain and ill that human life must bear;
Save me from selfish pining; let my heart,
Drawn from itself in sympathy, forget
The bitter longings of a vain regret,
The anguish of its own peculiar smart.
Remembering others, as I have to-day,
In their great sorrows, let me live alway
Not for myself alone, but have a part,
Such as a frail and erring spirit may,
In love which is of Thee, and which indeed Thou art!

1851.

THE PEACE OF EUROPE.

'GREAT peace in Europe! Order reigns
From Tiber's hills to Danube's plains!'
So say her kings and priests; so say
The lying prophets of our day.

Go lay to earth a listening ear;
The tramp of measured marches hear;
The rolling of the cannon's wheel,
The shotted musket's murderous peal,
The night alarm, the sentry's call,
The quick-eared spy in hut and hall!
From Polar sea and tropic fen
The dying-groans of exiled men!
The bolted cell, the galley's chains,
The scaffold smoking with its stains!
Order, the hush of brooding slaves!
Peace, in the dungeon-vaults and graves!

O Fisher! of the world-wide net,
With meshes in all waters set,
Whose fabled keys of heaven and hell
Bolt hard the patriot's prison-cell,
And open wide the banquet-hall,
Where kings and priests hold carnival!
Weak vassal tricked in royal guise,
Boy Kaiser with thy lip of lies;
Base gambler for Napoleon's crown,
Barnacle on his dead renown!
Thou, Bourbon Neapolitan,
Crowned scandal, loathed of God and man;
And thou, fell Spider of the North!
Stretching thy giant feelers forth,
Within whose web the freedom dies
Of nations eaten up like flies!
Speak, Prince and Kaiser, Priest and Czar!
If this be Peace, pray what is War?

White Angel of the Lord! unmeet
That soil accursed for thy pure feet.

Never in Slavery's desert flows
The fountain of thy charmed repose;
No tyrant's hand thy chaplet weaves
Of lilies and of olive-leaves;
Not with the wicked shalt thou dwell,
Thus saith the Eternal Oracle;
Thy home is with the pure and free!
Stern herald of thy better day,
Before thee, to prepare thy way,
The Baptist Shade of Liberty,
Gray, scarred and hairy-robed, must press
With bleeding feet the wilderness!
Oh that its voice might pierce the ear
Of princes, trembling while they hear
A cry as of the Hebrew seer:
Repent! God's kingdom draweth near!

1852.

ASTRÆA.

'Jove means to settle
Astræa in her seat again,
And let down from his golden chain
An age of better metal.'

BEN JONSON, 1615.

O POET rare and old!
Thy words are prophecies;
Forward the age of gold,
The new Saturnian lies.

The universal prayer
And hope are not in vain;
Rise, brothers! and prepare
The way for Saturn's reign.

Perish shall all which takes
From labor's board and can;
Perish shall all which makes
A spaniel of the man!

Free from its bonds the mind,
The body from the rod;
Broken all chains that bind
The image of our God.

Just men no longer pine
Behind their prison-bars;
Through the rent dungeon shine
The free sun and the stars.

Earth own, at last, untrod
By sect, or caste, or clan,
The fatherhood of God,
The brotherhood of man!

Fraud fail, craft perish, forth
The money-changers driven,
And God's will done on earth,
As now in heaven!

1852.

THE DISENTHRALLED.

He had bowed down to drunkenness,
An abject worshipper:
The pride of manhood's pulse had grown
Too faint and cold to stir;
And he had given his spirit up
To the unblessëd thrall,
And bowing to the poison cup,
He gloried in his fall!

There came a change—the cloud rolled off,
And light fell on his brain—
And like the passing of a dream
That cometh not again,
The shadow of the spirit fled
He saw the gulf before,
He shuddered at the waste behind,
And was a man once more.

He shook the serpent folds away,
That gathered round his heart,
As shakes the swaying forest-oak
Its poison vine apart;
He stood erect; returning pride
Grew terrible within,
And conscience sat in judgment, on
His most familiar sin.

The light of Intellect again
Along his pathway shone;
And Reason like a monarch sat
Upon his olden throne.
The honored and the wise once more
Within his presence came;
And lingered oft on lovely lips
His once forbidden name.

There may be glory in the might,
That treadeth nations down;
Wreaths for the crimson conqueror
Pride for the kingly crown;
But nobler is that triumph hour,
The disenthralled shall find,
When evil passion boweth down
Unto the Godlike mind!
1852.

THE POOR VOTER ON ELECTION DAY.

THE proudest now is but my peer,
The highest not more high;
To-day, of all the weary year,
A king of men am I.
To-day alike are great and small,
The nameless and the known;
My palace is the people's hall,
The ballot-box my throne!

Who serves to-day upon the list
Beside the served shall stand;
Alike the brown and wrinkled fist,
The gloved and dainty hand!
The rich is level with the poor,
The weak is strong to-day;
And sleekest broadcloth counts no more
Than homespun frock of gray.

To-day let pomp and vain pretence
My stubborn right abide;
I set a plain man's common sense
Against the pedant's pride.
To-day shall simple manhood try
The strength of gold and land;
The wide world has not wealth to buy
The power in my right hand!

While there's a grief to seek redress,
Or balance to adjust,
Where weighs our living manhood less
Than Mammon's vilest dust,—
While there's a right to need my vote,
A wrong to sweep away,
Up! clouted knee and ragged coat!
A man's a man to-day!
1848.

THE DREAM OF PIO NONO.

IT chanced that while the pious troops of France
Fought in the crusade Pio Nono preached,
What time the holy Bourbons stayed his hands
(The Hur and Aaron meet for such a Moses),
Stretched forth from Naples towards rebellious Rome
To bless the ministry of Oudinot,
And sanctify his iron homilies
And sharp persuasions of the bayonet,
That the great pontiff fell asleep, and dreamed.

He stood by Lake Tiberias, in the sun
Of the bright Orient; and beheld the lame,
The sick, and blind, kneel at the Master's feet,
And rise up whole. And, sweetly over all,
Dropping the ladder of their hymn of praise
From heaven to earth, in silver rounds of song,
He heard the blessed angels sing of peace,
Good-will to man, and glory to the Lord.

Then one, with feet unshod, and leathern face
Hardened and darkened by fierce summer suns
And hot winds of the desert, closer drew
His fisher's haick, and girded up his loins,
And spake, as one who had authority:
'Come thou with me.'

Lakeside and eastern sky
And the sweet song of angels passed away,
And, with a dream's alacrity of change,
The priest, and the swart fisher by his side,
Beheld the Eternal City lift its domes
And solemn fanes and monumental pomp

Above the waste Campagna. On the hills
The blaze of burning villas rose and fell,
And momently the mortar's iron throat
Roared from the trenches; and, within the walls,
Sharp crash of shells, low groans of human pain,
Shout, drum beat, and the clanging larum-bell,
And tramp of hosts, sent up a mingled sound,
Half wail and half defiance. As they passed
The gate of San Pancrazio, human blood
Flowed ankle-high about them, and dead men
Choked the long street with gashed and gory piles,—
A ghastly barricade of mangled flesh,
From which, at times, quivered a living hand,
And white lips moved and moaned. A father tore
His gray hairs, by the body of his son,
In frenzy; and his fair young daughter wept
On his old bosom. Suddenly a flash
Clove the thick sulphurous air, and man and maid
Sank, crushed and mangled by the shattering shell.

Then spake the Galilean: 'Thou hast seen
The blessed Master and His works of love;
Look now on thine! Hear'st thou the angels sing
Above this open hell? Thou God's high-priest!
Thou the Vicegerent of the Prince of Peace!
Thou the successor of His chosen ones!
I, Peter, fisherman of Galilee,
In the dear Master's name, and for the love
Of His true Church, proclaim thee Anti-christ,
Alien and separate from His holy faith,
Wide as the difference between death and life,
The hate of man and the great love of God!
Hence, and repent!'

Thereat the pontiff woke,
Trembling, and muttering o'er his fearful dream.
'What means he?' cried the Bourbon.
'Nothing more
Than that your majesty hath all too well
Catered for your poor guests, and that, in sooth,
The Holy Father's supper troubleth him,'
Said Cardinal Antonelli, with a smile.

1853.

THE VOICES.

'Why urge the long, unequal fight,
Since Truth has fallen in the street,
Or lift anew the trampled light,
Quenched by the heedless million's feet?

'Give o'er the thankless task; forsake
The fools who know not ill from good:
Eat, drink, enjoy thy own, and take
Thine ease among the multitude.

'Live out thyself; with others share
Thy proper life no more; assume
The unconcern of sun and air,
For life or death, or blight or bloom.

'The mountain pine looks calmly on
The fires that scourge the plains below,
Nor heeds the eagle in the sun
The small birds piping in the snow!

'The world is God's, not thine; let Him
Work out a change, if change must be:
The hand that planted best can trim
And nurse the old unfruitful tree.'

So spake the Tempter, when the light
Of sun and stars had left the sky;
I listened, through the cloud and night,
And heard, methought, a voice reply:

'Thy task may well seem over-hard,
Who scatterest in a thankless soil
Thy life as seed, with no reward
Save that which Duty gives to Toil.

'Not wholly is thy heart resigned
To Heaven's benign and just decree,
Which, linking thee with all thy kind,
Transmits their joys and griefs to thee.

'Break off that sacred chain, and turn
Back on thyself thy love and care;
Be thou thine own mean idol, burn
Faith, Hope, and Trust, thy children, there.

'Released from that fraternal law
Which shares the common bale and bliss,
No sadder lot could Folly draw,
Or Sin provoke from Fate, than this.

'The meal unshared is food unblest:
Thou hoard'st in vain what love should spend;
Self-ease is pain; thy only rest
Is labor for a worthy end;

'A toil that gains with what it yields,
And scatters to its own increase,
And hears, while sowing outward fields,
The harvest-song of inward peace.

'Free-lipped the liberal streamlets run,
Free shines for all the healthful ray;
The still pool stagnates in the sun,
The lurid earth-fire haunts decay!

'What is it that the crowd requite
Thy love with hate, thy truth with lies?
And but to faith, and not to sight,
The walls of Freedom's temple rise?

'Yet do thy work; it shall succeed
In thine or in another's day;
And, if denied the victor's meed,
Thou shalt not lack the toiler's pay.

'Faith shares the future's promise; Love's
Self-offering is a triumph won;
And each good thought or action moves
The dark world nearer to the sun.

'Then faint not, falter not, nor plead
Thy weakness; truth itself is strong;
The lion's strength, the eagle's speed,
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong.

'Thy nature, which, through fire and flood,
To place or gain finds out its way,
Hath power to seek the highest good,
And duty's holiest call obey!

'Strivest thou in darkness?—foes without
In league with traitor thoughts within;
Thy night-watch kept with trembling Doubt
And pale Remorse the ghost of Sin?

'Hast thou not, on some week of storm,
Seen the sweet Sabbath breaking fair,
And cloud and shadow, sunlit, form
The curtains of its tent of prayer?

'So, haply, when thy task shall end,
The wrong shall lose itself in right,
And all thy week-day darkness blend
With the long Sabbath of the light!'

1854.

THE NEW EXODUS.

Written upon hearing that slavery had been formally abolished in Egypt. Unhappily, the professions and pledges of the vacillating government of Egypt proved unreliable.

By fire and cloud, across the desert sand,
And through the parted waves,
From their long bondage, with an outstretched hand,
God led the Hebrew slaves!

Dead as the letter of the Pentateuch,
As Egypt's statues cold,
In the adytum of the sacred book
Now stands that marvel old.

'Lo, God *is* great!' the simple Moslem says.
We seek the ancient date,
Turn the dry scroll, and make that living phrase
A dead one: 'God *was* great!'

And, like the Coptic monks by Mousa's wells,
We dream of wonders past,
Vague as the tales the wandering Arab tells,
Each drowsier than the last.

O fools and blind! Above the Pyramids
Stretches once more that hand,
And trancëd Egypt, from her stony lids,
Flings back her veil of sand.

And morning-smitten Memnon, singing, wakes;
And, listening by his Nile,
O'er Ammon's grave and awful visage breaks
A sweet and human smile.

Not, as before, with hail and fire, and call
Of death for midnight graves,
But in the stillness of the noonday, fall
The fetters of the slaves.

No longer through the Red Sea, as of old,
The bondmen walk dry shod;
Through human hearts, by love of Him controlled,
Runs now that path of God!

1856.

THE CONQUEST OF FINLAND.

'Joseph Sturge, with a companion, Thomas Harvey, has been visiting the shores of Finland, to ascertain the amount of mischief and loss to poor and peaceable sufferers, occasioned by the gun-boats of the allied squadrons in the late war, with a view to obtaining relief for them.'—*Friends' Review.*

Across the frozen marshes
The winds of autumn blow,
And the fen-lands of the Wetter
Are white with early snow.

But where the low, gray headlands
Look o'er the Baltic brine,
A bark is sailing in the track
Of England's battle-line.

No wares hath she to barter
For Bothnia's fish and grain;
She saileth not for pleasure,
She saileth not for gain.

But still by isle or mainland
She drops her anchor down,
Where'er the British cannon
Rained fire on tower and town.

Outspake the ancient Amtman,
At the gate of Helsingfors:
'Why comes this ship a-spying
In the track of England's wars?'

'God bless her,' said the coast-guard,—
'God bless the ship, I say.
The holy angels trim the sails
That speed her on her way!

'Where'er she drops her anchor,
The peasant's heart is glad;
Where'er she spreads her parting sail,
The peasant's heart is sad.

'Each wasted town and hamlet
She visits to restore;
To roof the shattered cabin,
And feed the starving poor.

'The sunken boats of fishers,
The foraged beeves and grain,
The spoil of flake and storehouse,
The good ship brings again.

'And so to Finland's sorrow
The sweet amend is made,
As if the healing hand of Christ
Upon her wounds were laid!'

Then said the gray old Amtman,
'The will of God be done!
The battle lost by England's hate,
By England's love is won!

'We braved the iron tempest
That thundered on our shore;
But when did kindness fail to find
The key to Finland's door?

'No more from Aland's ramparts
Shall warning signal come,
Nor startled Sweaborg hear again
The roll of midnight drum.

'Beside our fierce Black Eagle
The Dove of Peace shall rest;
And in the mouths of cannon
The sea-bird make her nest.

'For Finland, looking seaward,
No coming foe shall scan;
And the holy bells of Abo
Shall ring, 'Good-will to man!'

'Then row thy boat, O fisher!
In peace on lake and bay;
And thou, young maiden, dance again
Around the poles of May!

'Sit down, old men, together,
Old wives, in quiet spin;
Henceforth the Anglo-Saxon
Is the brother of the Finn!'

1856.

THE EVE OF ELECTION.

FROM gold to gray
Our mild sweet day
Of Indian Summer fades too soon;
But tenderly
Above the sea
Hangs, white and calm, the hunter's moon.

In its pale fire,
The village spire
Shows like the zodiac's spectral lance;
The painted walls
Whereon it falls
Transfigured stand in marble trance!

O'er fallen leaves
The west-wind grieves,
Yet comes a seed-time round again;
And morn shall see
The State sown free
With baleful tares or healthful grain.

Along the street
The shadows meet
Of Destiny, whose hands conceal
The moulds of fate
That shape the State,
And make or mar the common weal.

Around I see
The powers that be;
I stand by Empire's primal springs;
And princes meet,
In every street,
And hear the tread of uncrowned kings!

Hark! through the crowd
The laugh runs loud,
Beneath the sad, rebuking moon.
God save the land
A careless hand
May shake or swerve ere morrow's noon!

No jest is this;
One cast amiss
May blast the hope of Freedom's year.
Oh, take me where
Are hearts of prayer,
And foreheads bowed in reverent fear!

Not lightly fall
Beyond recall
The written scrolls a breath can float;
The crowning fact
The kingliest act
Of Freedom is the freeman's vote!

For pearls that gem
A diadem
The diver in the deep sea dies;
The regal right
We boast to-night
Is ours through costlier sacrifice;

The blood of Vane,
His prison pain
Who traced the path the Pilgrim trod,
And hers whose faith
Drew strength from death,
And prayed her Russell up to God!

Our hearts grow cold,
We lightly hold
A right which brave men died to gain;
The stake, the cord,
The axe, the sword,
Grim nurses at its birth of pain.

The shadow rend,
And o'er us bend,
O martyrs, with your crowns and palms;
Breathe through these throngs
Your battle songs,
Your scaffold prayers, and dungeon psalms!

Look from the sky,
Like God's great eye,
Thou solemn moon, with searching beam,
Till in the sight
Of thy pure light
Our mean self-seekings meaner seem.

Shame from our hearts
Unworthy arts,
The fraud designed, the purpose dark;
And smite away
The hands we lay
Profanely on the sacred ark.

To party claims
And private aims,
Reveal that august face of Truth,
Whereto are given
The age of heaven,
The beauty of immortal youth.

So shall our voice
Of sovereign choice
Swell the deep bass of duty done,
And strike the key
Of time to be,
When God and man shall speak as one!

1858.

FROM PERUGIA.

'The thing which has the most dissevered the people from the Pope,—the *unforgivable* thing,—the breaking point between him and them,—has been the encouragement and promotion he gave to the officer under whom were executed the slaughters of Perugia. *That* made the breaking point in many honest hearts that had clung to him before.'—HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S *Letters from Italy*.

THE tall, sallow guardsmen their horse-tails have spread,
Flaming out in their violet, yellow, and red;
And behind go the lackeys in crimson and buff,
And the chamberlains gorgeous in velvet and ruff;
Next, in red-legged pomp, come the cardinals forth,
Each a lord of the church and a prince of the earth.

What 's this squeak of the fife, and this batter of drum?
Lo! the Swiss of the Church from Perugia come;
The militant angels, whose sabres drive home
To the hearts of the malcontents, cursed and abhorred,
The good Father's missives, and 'Thus saith the Lord!'
And lend to his logic the point of the sword!

O maids of Etruria, gazing forlorn
O'er dark Thrasymenus, dishevelled and torn!
O fathers, who pluck at your gray beards for shame!
O mothers, struck dumb by a woe without name!
Well ye know how the Holy Church hireling behaves,
And his tender compassion of prisons and graves!

There they stand, the hired stabbers, the bloodstains yet fresh,
That splashed like red wine from the vintage of flesh;
Grim instruments, careless as pincers and rack
How the joints tear apart, and the strained sinews crack;
But the hate that glares on them is sharp as their swords,
And the sneer and the scowl print the air with fierce words!

Off with hats, down with knees, shout your vivas like mad!
Here 's the Pope in his holiday righteousness clad,

From shorn crown to toe-nail, kiss-worn to the quick,
Of sainthood in purple the pattern and pick,
Who the *rôle* of the priest and the soldier unites,
And, praying like Aaron, like Joshua fights!

Is this Pio Nono the gracious, for whom
We sang our hosannas and lighted all Rome;
With whose advent we dreamed the new era began
When the priest should be human, the monk be a man?
Ah, the wolf's with the sheep, and the fox with the fowl,
When freedom we trust to the crosier and cowl!

Stand aside, men of Rome! Here 's a hangman-faced Swiss—
(A blessing for him surely can't go amiss)—
Would kneel down the sanctified slipper to kiss.
Short shrift will suffice him,—he's blest beyond doubt;
But there's blood on his hands which would scarcely wash out,
Though Peter himself held the baptismal spout!

Make way for the next! Here 's another sweet son!
What's this mastiff-jawed rascal in epaulets done?
He did, whispers rumor, (its truth God forbid!)
At Perugia what Herod at Bethlehem did.
And the mothers? Don't name them! these humors of war
They who keep him in service must pardon him for.

Hist! here's the arch-knave in a cardinal's hat,
With the heart of a wolf, and the stealth of a cat
(As if Judas and Herod together were rolled),
Who keeps, all as one, the Pope's conscience and gold,
Mounts guard on the altar, and pilfers from thence,
And flatters St. Peter while stealing his pence!

Who doubts Antonelli? Have miracles ceased
When robbers say mass, and Barabbas is priest?
When the Church eats and drinks, at its mystical board,
The true flesh and blood carved and shed by its sword,
When its martyr, unsinged, claps the crown on his head,
And roasts, as his proxy, his neighbor instead!

There! the bells jow and jangle the same blessed way
That they did when they rang for Bartholomew's day.
Hark! the tallow-faced monsters, nor women nor boys,
Vex the air with a shrill, sexless horror of noise.
Te Deum laudamus! All round without stint
The incense-pot swings with a taint of blood in 't!

And now for the blessing! Of little account,
You know, is the old one they heard on the Mount.
Its giver was landless, His raiment was poor,
No jewelled tiara His fishermen wore; 70
No incense, no lackeys, no riches, no home,
No Swiss guards! We order things better at Rome.

So bless us the strong hand, and curse us the weak;
Let Austria's vulture have food for her beak;

Let the wolf-whelp of Naples play Bomba again,
With his death-cap of silence, and halter, and chain;
Put reason, and justice, and truth under ban;
For the sin unforgiven is freedom for man!

1858.

ITALY.

Across the sea I heard the groans
Of nations in the intervals
Of wind and wave. Their blood and bones
Cried out in torture, crushed by thrones,
And sucked by priestly cannibals.

I dreamed of Freedom slowly gained
By martyr meekness, patience, faith,
And lo! an athlete grimly stained,
With corded muscles battle-strained,
Shouting it from the fields of death!

I turn me, awe-struck, from the sight,
Among the clamoring thousands mute,
I only know that God is right,
And that the children of the light
Shall tread the darkness under foot.

I know the pent fire heaves its crust,
That sultry skies the bolt will form
To smite them clear; that Nature must
The balance of her powers adjust,
Though with the earthquake and the storm.

God reigns, and let the earth rejoice!
I bow before His sterner plan.
Dumb are the organs of my choice;
He speaks in battle's stormy voice,
His praise is in the wrath of man!

Yet, surely as He lives, the day
Of peace He promised shall be ours,
To fold the flags of war, and lay
Its sword and spear to rust away,
And sow its ghastly fields with flowers!

1860.

FREEDOM IN BRAZIL.

With clearer light, Cross of the South, shine forth
In blue Brazilian skies;
And thou, O river, cleaving half the earth
From sunset to sunrise,
From the great mountains to the Atlantic waves
Thy joy's long anthem pour.
Yet a few years (God make them less!) and slaves
Shall shame thy pride no more.
No fettered feet thy shaded margins press;
But all men shall walk free
Where thou, the high-priest of the wilderness,
Hast wedded sea to sea.

And thou, great-hearted ruler, through whose mouth
The word of God is said,
Once more, 'Let there be light!'—Son of the South,
Lift up thy honored head,
Wear unashamed a crown by thy desert
More than by birth thy own,
Careless of watch and ward; thou art begirt
By grateful hearts alone.
The moated wall and battle-ship may fail.
But safe shall justice prove;
Stronger than greaves of brass or iron mail
The panoply of love.

Crowned doubly by man's blessing and God's grace,
Thy future is secure;
Who frees a people makes his statue's place
In Time's Valhalla sure.
Lo! from his Neva's banks the Scythian Czar
Stretches to thee his hand,
Who, with the pencil of the Northern star,
Wrote freedom on his land.

And he whose grave is holy by our calm
And prairied Sangamon,
From his gaunt hand shall drop the martyr's palm
To greet thee with 'Well done!'

And thou, O Earth, with smiles thy face make sweet,
And let thy wail be stilled,
To hear the Muse of prophecy repeat
Her promise half fulfilled.
The Voice that spake at Nazareth speaks still,
No sound thereof hath died;
Alike thy hope and Heaven's eternal will
Shall yet be satisfied.
The years are slow, the vision tarrieth long,
And far the end may be;
But, one by one, the fiends of ancient wrong
Go out and leave thee free.

1867.

AFTER ELECTION.

THE day's sharp strife is ended now,
Our work is done, God knoweth how!
As on the thronged, unrestful town
The patience of the moon looks down,
I wait to hear, beside the wire,
The voices of its tongues of fire.

Slow, doubtful, faint, they seem at first:
Be strong, my heart, to know the worst!
Hark! there the Alleghanies spoke;
That sound from lake and prairie broke,
That sunset-gun of triumph rent
The silence of a continent!

That signal from Nebraska sprung,
This from Nevada's mountain tongue!
Is that thy answer, strong and free,
O loyal heart of Tennessee?
What strange, glad voice is that which calls
From Wagner's grave and Sumter's walls?

From Mississippi's fountain-head
A sound as of the bison's tread!
There rustled freedom's Charter Oak!
In that wild burst the Ozarks spoke!
Cheer answers cheer from rise to set
Of sun. We have a country yet!

The praise, O God, be Thine alone!
Thou givest not for bread a stone;
Thou hast not led us through the night
To blind us with returning light;
Not through the furnace have we passed,
To perish at its mouth at last.

O night of peace, thy flight restrain!
November's moon, be slow to wane!
Shine on the freedman's cabin floor,
On brows of prayer a blessing pour;
And give, with full assurance blest,
The weary heart of Freedom rest!

1868.

DISARMAMENT.

'PUT up the sword!' The voice of Christ once more
Speaks, in the pauses of the cannon's roar,
O'er fields of corn by fiery sickles reaped
And left dry ashes; over trenches heaped
With nameless dead; o'er cities starving slow
Under a rain of fire; through wards of woe
Down which a groaning diapason runs
From tortured brothers, husbands, lovers, sons
Of desolate women in their far-off homes,
Waiting to hear the step that never comes!
O men and brothers! let that voice be heard.
War fails, try peace; put up the useless sword!

Fear not the end. There is a story told
In Eastern tents, when autumn nights grow cold,
And round the fire the Mongol shepherds sit
With grave responses listening unto it:
Once, on the errands of his mercy bent,
Buddha, the holy and benevolent,
Met a fell monster, huge and fierce of look,
Whose awful voice the hills and forests shook.
'O son of peace!' the giant cried, 'thy fate
Is sealed at last, and love shall yield to hate.'

The unarmed Buddha looking, with no trace
Of fear or anger, in the monster's face,
In pity said: 'Poor fiend, even thee I love.'
Lo! as he spake the sky-tall terror sank
To hand-breadth size; the huge abhorrence shrank
Into the form and fashion of a dove;
And where the thunder of its rage was heard,
Circling above him sweetly sang the bird:
'Hate hath no harm for love,' so ran the song;
'And peace unweaponed conquers every wrong!'

1871.

THE PROBLEM.

I.

NOT without envy Wealth at times must look
On their brown strength who wield the reaping-hook
And scythe, or at the forge-fire shape the plough
Or the steel harness of the steeds of steam;
All who, by skill and patience, anyhow
Make service noble, and the earth redeem
From savageness. By kingly accolade
Than theirs was never worthier knighthood made.
Well for them, if, while demagogues their vain
And evil counsels proffer, they maintain
Their honest manhood unseduced, and wage
No war with Labor's right to Labor's gain
Of sweet home-comfort, rest of hand and brain,
And softer pillow for the head of Age.

II.

And well for Gain if it ungrudging yields
Labor its just demand; and well for Ease
If in the uses of its own, it sees
No wrong to him who tills its pleasant fields
And spreads the table of its luxuries.
The interests of the rich man and the poor
Are one and same, inseparable evermore;
And, when scant wage or labor fail to give
Food, shelter, raiment, wherewithal to live,
Need has its rights, necessity its claim.
Yea, even self-wrought misery and shame
Test well the charity suffering long and kind.
The home-pressed question of the age can find
No answer in the catch-words of the blind
Leaders of blind. Solution there is none
Save in the Golden Rule of Christ alone.

1877.

OUR COUNTRY.

Read at Woodstock, Conn., July 4, 1883.

WE give thy natal day to hope,
O Country of our love and prayer!
Thy way is down no fatal slope,
But up to freer sun and air.

Tried as by furnace-fires, and yet
By God's grace only stronger made,
In future tasks before thee set
Thou shalt not lack the old-time aid.

The fathers sleep, but men remain
As wise, as true, and brave as they;
Why count the loss and not the gain?
The best is that we have to-day.

Whate'er of folly, shame, or crime,
Within thy mighty bounds transpires,
With speed defying space and time
Comes to us on the accusing wires;

While of thy wealth of noble deeds,
Thy homes of peace, thy votes unsold,
The love that pleads for human needs,
The wrong redressed, but half is told!

We read each felon's chronicle,
His acts, his words, his gallows-mood;
We know the single sinner well
And not the nine and ninety good.

Yet if, on daily scandals fed,
We seem at times to doubt thy worth,
We know thee still, when all is said,
The best and dearest spot on earth.

From the warm Mexic Gulf, or where
Belted with flowers Los Angeles
Basks in the semi-tropic air,
To where Katahdin's cedar trees

Are dwarfed and bent by Northern winds,
Thy plenty's horn is yearly filled;
Alone, the rounding century finds
Thy liberal soil by free hands tilled.

A refuge for the wronged and poor,
Thy generous heart has borne the blame
That, with them, through thy open door,
The old world's evil outcasts came.

But, with thy just and equal rule,
And labor's need and breadth of lands,
Free press and rostrum, church and school,
Thy sure, if slow, transforming hands

Shall mould even them to thy design,
Making a blessing of the ban;
And Freedom's chemistry combine
The alien elements of man.

The power that broke their prison bar
And set the dusky millions free,
And welded in the flame of war
The Union fast to Liberty,

Shall it not deal with other ills,
Redress the red man's grievance, break
The Circean cup which shames and kills,
And Labor full requital make?

Alone to such as fitly bear
Thy civic honors bid them fall?
And call thy daughters forth to share
The rights and duties pledged to all?

Give every child his right of school,
Merge private greed in public good,
And spare a treasury overfull
The tax upon a poor man's food?

No lack was in thy primal stock,
No weakling founders builded here;
Thine were the men of Plymouth Rock,
The Huguenot and Cavalier;

And they whose firm endurance gained
The freedom of the souls of men,
Whose hands, unstained with blood, maintained
The swordless commonwealth of Penn.

And thine shall be the power of all
To do the work which duty bids,
And make the people's council hall
As lasting as the Pyramids!

Well have thy later years made good
Thy brave-said word a century back,
The pledge of human brotherhood,
The equal claim of white and black.

That word still echoes round the world,
And all who hear it turn to thee,
And read upon thy flag unfurled
The prophecies of destiny.

Thy great world-lesson all shall learn,
The nations in thy school shall sit,
Earth's farthest mountain-tops shall burn
With watch-fires from thy own uplit.

Great without seeking to be great
By fraud or conquest, rich in gold,
But richer in the large estate
Of virtue which thy children hold,

With peace that comes of purity
And strength to simple justice due,
So runs our loyal dream of thee;
God of our fathers! make it true.

O Land of lands! to thee we give
Our prayers, our hopes, our service free;
For thee thy sons shall nobly live,
And at thy need shall die for thee!

ON THE BIG HORN.

In the disastrous battle on the Big Horn River, in which General Custer and his entire force were slain, the chief Rain-in-the-Face was one of the fiercest leaders of the Indians.

In Longfellow's poem on the massacre, these lines will be remembered:—

'Revenge!' cried Rain-in-the-Face,
'Revenge upon all the race
Of the White Chief with yellow hair!'
And the mountains dark and high
From their crags reëchoed the cry
Of his anger and despair.

He is now a man of peace; and the agent at Standing Rock, Dakota, writes, September 28, 1886: 'Rain-in-the-Face is very anxious to go to Hampton. I fear he is too old, but he desires very much to go.' *The Southern Workman*, the organ of General Armstrong's Industrial School at Hampton, Va., says in a late number:—

'Rain-in-the-Face has applied before to come to Hampton, but his age would exclude him from the school as an ordinary student. He has shown himself very much in earnest about it, and is anxious, all say, to learn the better ways of life. It is as unusual as it is striking to see a man of his age, and one who has had such an experience, willing to give up the old way, and put himself in the position of a boy and a student.'

THE years are but half a score,
And the war-whoop sounds no more
With the blast of bugles, where
Straight into a slaughter pen,
With his doomed three hundred men,
Rode the chief with the yellow hair.

O Hampton, down by the sea!
What voice is beseeching thee
For the scholar's lowliest place?
Can this be the voice of him
Who fought on the Big Horn's rim?
Can this be Rain-in-the-Face?

His war-paint is washed away,
His hands have forgotten to slay;
He seeks for himself and his race
The arts of peace and the lore
That give to the skilled hand more
Than the spoils of war and chase.

O chief of the Christ-like school!
Can the zeal of thy heart grow cool
When the victor scarred with fight
Like a child for thy guidance craves,
And the faces of hunters and braves
Are turning to thee for light?

The hatchet lies overgrown
With grass by the Yellowstone,
Wind River and Paw of Bear;
And, in sign that foes are friends,
Each lodge like a peace-pipe sends
Its smoke in the quiet air.

The hands that have done the wrong
To right the wronged are strong,
And the voice of a nation saith:
'Enough of the war of swords,
Enough of the lying words
And shame of a broken faith!'

The hills that have watched afar
The valleys ablaze with war
Shall look on the tasselled corn;
And the dust of the grinded grain,
Instead of the blood of the slain,
Shall sprinkle thy banks, Big Horn!

The Ute and the wandering Crow
Shall know as the white men know,
And fare as the white men fare;
The pale and the red shall be brothers,
One's rights shall be as another's,
Home, School, and House of Prayer!

O mountains that climb to snow,
O river winding below,
Through meadows by war once trod,
O wild, waste lands that await
The harvest exceeding great,
Break forth into praise of God!

1887.

Poems Subjective and Reminiscent

MEMORIES.

['It was not without thought and deliberation,' Whittier's biographer writes, 'that in 1888 he directed this poem to be placed at the head of his Poems Subjective and Reminiscent. He had never before publicly acknowledged how much of his heart was wrapped up in this delightful play of poetic fancy. The poem was written in 1841, and although the romance it embalms lies far back of this date, possibly there is a heart still beating which fully understands its meaning. The biographer can do no more than make this suggestion, which has the sanction of the poet's explicit word. To a friend who told him that *Memories* was her favorite poem, he said, "I love it too; but I hardly knew whether to publish it, it was so personal and near my heart."']

A BEAUTIFUL and happy girl,
With step as light as summer air,
Eyes glad with smiles, and brow of pearl,
Shadowed by many a careless curl
Of unconfined and flowing hair;
A seeming child in everything,
Save thoughtful brow and ripening charms,
As Nature wears the smile of Spring
When sinking into Summer's arms.

A mind rejoicing in the light
Which melted through its graceful bower,
Leaf after leaf, dew-moist and bright,
And stainless in its holy white,
Unfolding like a morning flower:
A heart, which, like a fine-toned lute,
With every breath of feeling woke,
And, even when the tongue was mute,
From eye and lip in music spoke.

How thrills once more the lengthening chain
Of memory, at the thought of thee!
Old hopes which long in dust have lain
Old dreams, come thronging back again,
And boyhood lives again in me;
I feel its glow upon my cheek,
Its fulness of the heart is mine,
As when I leaned to hear thee speak,
Or raised my doubtful eye to thine.

I hear again thy low replies,
I feel thy arm within my own,
And timidly again uprise
The fringëd lids of hazel eyes,
With soft brown tresses overblown.
Ah! memories of sweet summer eves,
Of moonlit wave and willowy way,
Of stars and flowers, and dewy leaves,
And smiles and tones more dear than they!

Ere this, thy quiet eye hath smiled
My picture of thy youth to see,
When, half a woman, half a child,
Thy very artlessness beguiled,
And folly's self seemed wise in thee;
I too can smile, when o'er that hour
The lights of memory backward stream,
Yet feel the while that manhood's power
Is vainer than my boyhood's dream.

Years have passed on, and left their trace,
Of graver care and deeper thought;
And unto me the calm, cold face
Of manhood, and to thee the grace
Of woman's pensive beauty brought.
More wide, perchance, for blame than praise,
The school-boy's humble name has flown;
Thine, in the green and quiet ways
Of unobtrusive goodness known.

And wider yet in thought and deed
Diverge our pathways, one in youth;
Thine the Genevan's sternest creed,
While answers to my spirit's need
The Derby dalesman's simple truth.
For thee, the priestly rite and prayer,
And holy day, and solemn psalm;
For me, the silent reverence where
My brethren gather, slow and calm.

Yet hath thy spirit left on me
An impress Time has worn not out,
And something of myself in thee,
A shadow from the past, I see,
Lingering, even yet, thy way about;
Not wholly can the heart unlearn
That lesson of its better hours,
Not yet has Time's dull footstep worn
To common dust that path of flowers.

Thus, while at times before our eyes
The shadows melt, and fall apart,
And, smiling through them, round us lies
The warm light of our morning skies,—
The Indian Summer of the heart!
In secret sympathies of mind,
In founts of feeling which retain
Their pure, fresh flow, we yet may find
Our early dreams not wholly vain!

1841.

RAPHAEL.

Suggested by the portrait of Raphael, at the age of fifteen.

I SHALL not soon forget that sight:
The glow of Autumn's westering day,
A hazy warmth, a dreamy light,
On Raphael's picture lay.

It was a simple print I saw,
The fair face of a musing boy;
Yet, while I gazed, a sense of awe
Seemed blending with my joy.

A simple print,—the graceful flow
Of boyhood's soft and wavy hair,
And fresh young lip and cheek, and brow
Unmarked and clear, were there.

Yet through its sweet and calm repose
I saw the inward spirit shine;
It was as if before me rose
The white veil of a shrine.

As if, as Gothland's sage has told,
The hidden life, the man within,
Dissevered from its frame and mould,
By mortal eye were seen.

Was it the lifting of that eye,
The waving of that pictured hand?
Loose as a cloud-wreath on the sky,
I saw the walls expand.

The narrow room had vanished,—space,
Broad, luminous, remained alone,
Through which all hues and shapes of grace
And beauty looked or shone.

Around the mighty master came
The marvels which his pencil wrought,
Those miracles of power whose fame
Is wide as human thought.

There drooped thy more than mortal face,
O Mother, beautiful and mild!
Enfolding in one dear embrace
Thy Saviour and thy Child!

The rapt brow of the Desert John;
The awful glory of that day
When all the Father's brightness shone
Through manhood's veil of clay.

And, midst gray prophet forms, and wild
Dark visions of the days of old,
How sweetly woman's beauty smiled
Through locks of brown and gold!

There Fornarina's fair young face
Once more upon her lover shone,
Whose model of an angel's grace
He borrowed from her own.

Slow passed that vision from my view,
But not the lesson which it taught;
The soft, calm shadows which it threw
Still rested on my thought:

The truth, that painter, bard, and sage,
Even in Earth's cold and changeful clime,
Plant for their deathless heritage
The fruits and flowers of time.

We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our Future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.

The tissue of the Life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of Destiny
We reap as we have sown.

Still shall the soul around it call
The shadows which it gathered here,
And, painted on the eternal wall,
The Past shall reappear.

Think ye the notes of holy song
On Milton's tuneful ear have died?
Think ye that Raphael's angel throng
Has vanished from his side?

Oh no!—We live our life again;
Or warmly touched, or coldly dim,
The pictures of the Past remain,—
Man's works shall follow him!

1842.

EGO.

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF A FRIEND.

[Originally entitled *Lines Written in the Book of a Friend.*]

On page of thine I cannot trace
The cold and heartless commonplace,
A statue's fixed and marble grace.

For ever as these lines I penned,
Still with the thought of thee will blend
That of some loved and common friend,

Who in life's desert track has made
His pilgrim tent with mine, or strayed
Beneath the same remembered shade.

And hence my pen unfettered moves
In freedom which the heart approves,
The negligence which friendship loves.

And wilt thou prize my poor gift less
For simple air and rustic dress,
And sign of haste and carelessness?

Oh, more than specious counterfeit
Of sentiment or studied wit,
A heart like thine should value it.

Yet half I fear my gift will be
Unto thy book, if not to thee,
Of more than doubtful courtesy.

A banished name from Fashion's sphere,
A lay unheard of Beauty's ear,
Forbid, disowned,—what do they here?

Upon my ear not all in vain
Came the sad captive's clanking chain,
The groaning from his bed of pain.

And sadder still, I saw the woe
Which only wounded spirits know
When Pride's strong footsteps o'er them go.

Spurned not alone in walks abroad,
But from the temples of the Lord
Thrust out apart, like things abhorred.

Deep as I felt, and stern and strong,
In words which Prudence smothered long,
My soul spoke out against the wrong;

Not mine alone the task to speak
Of comfort to the poor and weak,
And dry the tear on Sorrow's cheek;

But, mingled in the conflict warm,
To pour the fiery breath of storm
Through the harsh trumpet of Reform;

To brave Opinion's settled frown,
From ermined robe and saintly gown,
While wrestling reverenced Error down.

Founts gushed beside my pilgrim way,
Cool shadows on the greensward lay,
Flowers swung upon the bending spray.

And, broad and bright, on either hand,
Stretched the green slopes of Fairy-land,
With Hope's eternal sunbow spanned;

Whence voices called me like the flow,
Which on the listener's ear will grow,
Of forest streamlets soft and low.

And gentle eyes, which still retain
Their picture on the heart and brain,
Smiled, beckoning from that path of pain.

In vain! nor dream, nor rest, nor pause
Remain for him who round him draws
The battered mail of Freedom's cause.

From youthful hopes, from each green spot
Of young Romance, and gentle Thought,
Where storm and tumult enter not;

From each fair altar, where belong
The offerings Love requires of Song
In homage to her bright-eyed throng;

With soul and strength, with heart and hand,
I turned to Freedom's struggling band,
To the sad Helots of our land.

What marvel then that Fame should turn
Her notes of praise to those of scorn;
Her gifts reclaimed, her smiles withdrawn?

What matters it? a few years more,
Life's surge so restless heretofore
Shall break upon the unknown shore!

In that far land shall disappear
The shadows which we follow here,
The mist-wreaths of our atmosphere!

Before no work of mortal hand,
Of human will or strength expand
The pearl gates of the Better Land;

Alone in that great love which gave
Life to the sleeper of the grave,
Resteth the power to seek and save.

Yet, if the spirit gazing through
The vista of the past can view
One deed to Heaven and virtue true;

If through the wreck of wasted powers,
Of garlands wreathed from Folly's bowers,
Of idle aims and misspent hours,

The eye can note one sacred spot
By Pride and Self profaned not,
A green place in the waste of thought,

Where deed or word hath rendered less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And Gratitude looks forth to bless;

The simple burst of tenderest feeling
From sad hearts worn by evil-dealing,
For blessing on the hand of healing;

Better than Glory's pomp will be
That green and blessed spot to me,
A palm-shade in Eternity!

Something of Time which may invite
The purified and spiritual sight
To rest on with a calm delight.

And when the summer winds shall sweep
With their light wings my place of sleep,
And mosses round my headstone creep;

If still, as Freedom's rallying sign,
Upon the young heart's altars shine
The very fires they caught from mine;

If words my lips once uttered still,
In the calm faith and steadfast will
Of other hearts, their work fulfil;

Perchance with joy the soul may learn
These tokens, and its eye discern
The fires which on those altars burn;

A marvellous joy that even then,
The spirit hath its life again,
In the strong hearts of mortal men.

Take, lady, then, the gift I bring,
No gay and graceful offering,
No flower-smile of the laughing spring.

Midst the green buds of Youth's fresh May,
With Fancy's leaf-enwoven bay,
My sad and sombre gift I lay.

And if it deepens in thy mind
A sense of suffering human-kind,—
The outcast and the spirit-blind;

Oppressed and spoiled on every side,
By Prejudice, and Scorn, and Pride,
Life's common courtesies denied;

Sad mothers mourning o'er their trust,
Children by want and misery nursed,
Tasting life's bitter cup at first;

If to their strong appeals which come
From fireless hearth, and crowded room,
And the close alley's noisome gloom,—

Though dark the hands upraised to thee
In mute beseeching agony,
Thou lend'st thy woman's sympathy;

Not vainly on thy gentle shrine,
Where Love, and Mirth, and Friendship twine
Their varied gifts, I offer mine.

1843.

THE PUMPKIN.

Oh, greenly and fair in the lands of the sun,
The vines of the gourd and the rich melon run,
And the rock and the tree and the cottage enfold,
With broad leaves all greenness and blossoms all gold,
Like that which o'er Nineveh's prophet once grew,
While he waited to know that his warning was true,
And longed for the storm-cloud, and listened in vain
For the rush of the whirlwind and red fire-rain.

On the banks of the Xenil the dark Spanish maiden
Comes up with the fruit of the tangled vine laden;
And the Creole of Cuba laughs out to behold
Through orange-leaves shining the broad spheres of gold;
Yet with dearer delight from his home in the North.
On the fields of his harvest the Yankee looks forth,
Where crook-necks are coiling and yellow fruit shines,
And the sun of September melts down on his vines.

Ah! on Thanksgiving day, when from East and from West,
From North and from South come the pilgrim and guest,
When the gray-haired New Englander sees round his board
The old broken links of affection restored,
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,
And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before,
What moistens the lip and what brightens the eye?
What calls back the past, like the rich Pumpkin pie?

Oh, fruit loved of boyhood! the old days recalling,
When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were falling!
When wild, ugly faces we carved in its skin,
Glaring out through the dark with a candle within!
When we laughed round the corn-heap, with hearts all in tune,
Our chair a broad pumpkin,—our lantern the moon,
Telling tales of the fairy who travelled like steam,
In a pumpkin-shell coach, with two rats for her team!

Then thanks for thy present! none sweeter or better
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter!
Fairer hands never wrought at a pastry more fine,
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking, than thine!
And the prayer, which my mouth is too full to express,
Swells my heart that thy shadow may never be less,
That the days of thy lot may be lengthened below,
And the fame of thy worth like a pumpkin-vine grow,

And thy life be as sweet, and its last sunset sky
Golden-tinted and fair as thy own Pumpkin pie!

1844.

FORGIVENESS.

My heart was heavy, for its trust had been
Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong;
So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men,
One summer Sabbath day I strolled among
The green mounds of the village burial-place;
Where, pondering how all human love and hate
Find one sad level; and how, soon or late,
Wronged and wrongdoer, each with meekened face,
And cold hands folded over a still heart,
Pass the green threshold of our common grave,
Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart,
Awed for myself, and pitying my race,
Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave,
Swept all my pride away, and trembling I forgave!

1846.

TO MY SISTER,

WITH A COPY OF 'THE SUPERNATURALISM OF NEW ENGLAND.'

The work referred to was a series of papers under this title, contributed to the *Democratic Review* and afterward collected into a volume, in which I noted some of the superstitions and folklore prevalent in New England. The volume has not been kept in print, but most of its contents are distributed in my *Literary Recreations and Miscellanies* [now scattered in volumes v. and vi. of the Riverside edition].

Dear Sister! while the wise and sage
Turn coldly from my playful page,
And count it strange that ripened age
Should stoop to boyhood's folly;
I know that thou wilt judge aright
Of all which makes the heart more light,
Or lends one star-gleam to the night
Of clouded Melancholy.

Away with weary cares and themes!
Swing wide the moonlit gate of dreams!
Leave free once more the land which teems
With wonders and romances!
Where thou, with clear discerning eyes,
Shalt rightly read the truth which lies
Beneath the quaintly masking guise
Of wild and wizard fancies.

Lo! once again our feet we set
On still green wood-paths, twilight wet,
By lonely brooks, whose waters fret
The roots of spectral beeches;
Again the hearth-fire glimmers o'er
Home's whitewashed wall and painted floor,
And young eyes widening to the lore
Of faery-folks and witches.

Dear heart! the legend is not vain
Which lights that holy hearth again,
And calling back from care and pain,
And death's funereal sadness,
Draws round its old familiar blaze
The clustering groups of happier days,
And lends to sober manhood's gaze
A glimpse of childish gladness.

And, knowing how my life hath been
A weary work of tongue and pen,
A long, harsh strife with strong-willed men,
Thou wilt not chide my turning
To con, at times, an idle rhyme,
To pluck a flower from childhood's clime,
Or listen, at Life's noonday chime,
For the sweet bells of Morning!

1847.

MY THANKS,

ACCOMPANYING MANUSCRIPTS PRESENTED TO A FRIEND.

[Formerly entitled *Lines.*]

'T is said that in the Holy Land
The angels of the place have blessed
The pilgrim's bed of desert sand,
Like Jacob's stone of rest.

That down the hush of Syrian skies
Some sweet-voiced saint at twilight sings
The song whose holy symphonies
Are beat by unseen wings;

Till starting from his sandy bed,
The wayworn wanderer looks to see
The halo of an angel's head
Shine through the tamarisk-tree.

So through the shadows of my way
Thy smile hath fallen soft and clear,
So at the weary close of day
Hath seemed thy voice of cheer.

That pilgrim pressing to his goal
May pause not for the vision's sake,
Yet all fair things within his soul
The thought of it shall wake:

The graceful palm-tree by the well,
Seen on the far horizon's rim;
The dark eyes of the fleet gazelle,
Bent timidly on him;

Each pictured saint, whose golden hair
Streams sunlike through the convent's gloom;
Pale shrines of martyrs young and fair,
And loving Mary's tomb;

And thus each tint or shade which falls,
From sunset cloud or waving tree,
Along my pilgrim path, recalls
The pleasant thought of thee.

Of one in sun and shade the same,
In weal and woe my steady friend,
Whatever by that holy name
The angels comprehend.

Not blind to faults and follies, thou
Hast never failed the good to see,
Nor judged by one unseemly bough
The upward-struggling tree.

These light leaves at thy feet I lay,—
Poor common thoughts on common things,
Which Time is shaking, day by day,
Like feathers from his wings;

Chance shootings from a frail life-tree,
To nurturing care but little known,
Their good was partly learned of thee,
Their folly is my own.

That tree still clasps the kindly mould,
Its leaves still drink the twilight dew,
And weaving its pale green with gold,
Still shines the sunlight through.

There still the morning zephyrs play,
And there at times the spring bird sings,
And mossy trunk and fading spray
Are flowered with glossy wings.

Yet, even in genial sun and rain,
Root, branch, and leaflet fail and fade;
The wanderer on its lonely plain
Erelong shall miss its shade.

O friend beloved, whose curious skill
Keeps bright the last year's leaves and flowers,
With warm, glad, summer thoughts to fill
The cold, dark, winter hours!

Pressed on thy heart, the leaves I bring
May well defy the wintry cold,
Until, in Heaven's eternal spring,
Life's fairer ones unfold.

1847.

REMEMBRANCE.

WITH COPIES OF THE AUTHOR'S WRITINGS.

FRIEND of mine! whose lot was cast
With me in the distant past;
Where, like shadows flitting fast,

Fact and fancy, thought and theme,
Word and work, begin to seem
Like a half-remembered dream!

Touched by change have all things been,
Yet I think of thee as when
We had speech of lip and pen.

For the calm thy kindness lent
To a path of discontent,
Rough with trial and dissent;

Gentle words where such were few,
Softening blame where blame was true,
Praising where small praise was due;

For a waking dream made good,
For an ideal understood,
For thy Christian womanhood;

For thy marvellous gift to cull
From our common life and dull
Whatsoe'er is beautiful;

Thoughts and fancies, Hybla's bees
Dropping sweetness; true heart's-ease
Of congenial sympathies;—

Still for these I own my debt;
Memory, with her eyelids wet,
Fain would thank thee even yet!

And as one who scatters flowers
Where the Queen of May's sweet hours
Sits o'ertwined with blossomed bowers,

In superfluous zeal bestowing
Gifts where gifts are overflowing,
So I pay the debt I'm owing.

To thy full thoughts, gay or sad,
Sunny-hued or sober clad,
Something of my own I add;

Well assured that thou wilt take
Even the offering which I make
Kindly for the giver's sake.

1851.

MY NAMESAKE.

Addressed to Francis Greenleaf Allinson of Burlington, N. J.

You scarcely need my tardy thanks,
Who, self-rewarded, nurse and tend—
A green leaf on your own Green Banks—
The memory of your friend.

For me, no wreath, bloom-woven, hides
The sobered brow and lessening hair:
For aught I know, the myrtled sides
Of Helicon are bare.

Their scallop-shells so many bring
The fabled founts of song to try,
They've drained, for aught I know, the spring
Of Aganippe dry.

Ah well!—The wreath the Muses braid
Proves often Folly's cap and bell;
Methinks, my ample beaver's shade
May serve my turn as well.

Let Love's and Friendship's tender debt
Be paid by those I love in life.
Why should the unborn critic whet
For me his scalping-knife?

Why should the stranger peer and pry
One's vacant house of life about,
And drag for curious ear and eye
His faults and follies out?—

Why stuff, for fools to gaze upon,
With chaff of words, the garb he wore,
As corn-husks when the ear is gone
Are rustled all the more?

Let kindly Silence close again,
The picture vanish from the eye,
And on the dim and misty main
Let the small ripple die.

Yet not the less I own your claim
To grateful thanks, dear friends of mine.
Hang, if it please you so, my name
Upon your household line.

Let Fame from brazen lips blow wide
Her chosen names, I envy none:
A mother's love, a father's pride,
Shall keep alive my own!

Still shall that name as now recall
The young leaf wet with morning dew,
The glory where the sunbeams fall
The breezy woodlands through.

That name shall be a household word,
A spell to waken smile or sigh;
In many an evening prayer be heard
And cradle lullaby.

And thou, dear child, in riper days
When asked the reason of thy name,
Shalt answer: 'One 't were vain to praise
Or censure bore the same.

'Some blamed him, some believed him good,
The truth lay doubtless 'twixt the two;
He reconciled as best he could
Old faith and fancies new.

'In him the grave and playful mixed,
And wisdom held with folly truce,
And Nature compromised betwixt
Good fellow and recluse.

'He loved his friends, forgave his foes;
And, if his words were harsh at times,
He spared his fellow-men,—his blows
Fell only on their crimes.

'He loved the good and wise, but found
His human heart to all akin
Who met him on the common ground
Of suffering and of sin.

'Whate'er his neighbors might endure
Of pain or grief his own became;
For all the ills he could not cure
He held himself to blame.

'His good was mainly an intent,
His evil not of forethought done;
The work he wrought was rarely meant
Or finished as begun.

'Ill served his tides of feeling strong
To turn the common mills of use;
And, over restless wings of song,
His birthright garb hung loose!

'His eye was beauty's powerless slave,
And his the ear which discord pains;
Few guessed beneath his aspect grave
What passions strove in chains.

'He had his share of care and pain,
No holiday was life to him;
Still in the heirloom cup we drain
The bitter drop will swim.

'Yet Heaven was kind, and here a bird
And there a flower beguiled his way;
And, cool, in summer noons, he heard
The fountains plash and play.

'On all his sad or restless moods
The patient peace of Nature stole;
The quiet of the fields and woods
Sank deep into his soul.

'He worshipped as his fathers did,
And kept the faith of childish days,
And, howsoe'er he strayed or slid,
He loved the good old ways.

'The simple tastes, the kindly traits,
The tranquil air, and gentle speech,
The silence of the soul that waits
For more than man to teach.

'The cant of party, school, and sect,
Provoked at times his honest scorn,
And Folly, in its gray respect,
He tossed on satire's horn.

'But still his heart was full of awe
And reverence for all sacred things;
And, brooding over form and law,
He saw the Spirit's wings!

'Life's mystery wrapt him like a cloud;
He heard far voices mock his own,
The sweep of wings unseen, the loud,
Long roll of waves unknown.

'The arrows of his straining sight
Fell quenched in darkness; priest and sage,
Like lost guides calling left and right,
Perplexed his doubtful age.

'Like childhood, listening for the sound
Of its dropped pebbles in the well,
All vainly down the dark profound
His brief-lined plummet fell.

'So, scattering flowers with pious pains
On old beliefs, of later creeds,
Which claimed a place in Truth's domains,
He asked the title-deeds.

'He saw the old-time's groves and shrines
In the long distance fair and dim;
And heard, like sound of far-off pines,
The century-mellowed hymn!

'He dared not mock the Dervish whirl,
The Brahmin's rite, the Lama's spell;
God knew the heart; Devotion's pearl
Might sanctify the shell.

'While others trod the altar stairs
He faltered like the publican;
And, while they praised as saints, his prayers
Were those of sinful man.

'For, awed by Sinai's Mount of Law,
The trembling faith alone sufficed,
That, through its cloud and flame, he saw
The sweet, sad face of Christ!

And listening, with his forehead bowed,
Heard the Divine compassion fill
The pauses of the trump and cloud
With whispers small and still.

'The words he spake, the thoughts he penned,
Are mortal as his hand and brain,
But, if they served the Master's end,
He has not lived in vain!'

Heaven make thee better than thy name,
Child of my friends!—For thee I crave
What riches never bought, nor fame
To mortal longing gave.

I pray the prayer of Plato old:
God make thee beautiful within,
And let thine eyes the good behold
In everything save sin!

Imagination held in check
To serve, not rule, thy poised mind;
Thy Reason, at the frown or beck
Of Conscience, loose or bind.

No dreamer thou, but real all,—
Strong manhood crowning vigorous youth;
Life made by duty epical
And rhythmic with the truth.

So shall that life the fruitage yield
Which trees of healing only give,
And green-leafed in the Eternal field
Of God, forever live!

1853.

A MEMORY.

[The singer in this poem was a daughter of Whittier's early friend, N. P. Rogers.]

Here, while the loom of Winter weaves
The shroud of flowers and fountains,
I think of thee and summer eves
Among the Northern mountains.

When thunder tolled the twilight's close,
And winds the lake were rude on,
And thou wert singing, *Ca' the Yowes*,
The bonny yowes of Cluden!

When, close and closer, hushing breath,
Our circle narrowed round thee,
And smiles and tears made up the wreath
Wherewith our silence crowned thee;

And, strangers all, we felt the ties
Of sisters and of brothers;
Ah! whose of all those kindly eyes
Now smile upon another's?

The sport of Time, who still apart
The waifs of life is flinging;
Oh, nevermore shall heart to heart
Draw nearer for that singing!

Yet when the panes are frosty-starred,
And twilight's fire is gleaming,
I hear the songs of Scotland's bard
Sound softly through my dreaming!

A song that lends to winter snows
The glow of summer weather,—
Again I hear thee ca' the yowes
To Cluden's hills of heather!

1854.

MY DREAM.

In my dream, methought I trod,
Yesternight, a mountain road;
Narrow as Al Sirat's span,
High as eagle's flight, it ran.

Overhead, a roof of cloud
With its weight of thunder bowed;
Underneath, to left and right,
Blankness and abysmal night.

Here and there a wild-flower blushed;
Now and then a bird-song gushed;
Now and then, through rifts of shade,
Stars shone out, and sunbeams played.

But the goodly company,
Walking in that path with me,
One by one the brink o'erslid,
One by one the darkness hid.

Some with wailing and lament,
Some with cheerful courage went;
But, of all who smiled or mourned,
Never one to us returned.

Anxiously, with eye and ear,
Questioning that shadow drear,
Never hand in token stirred,
Never answering voice I heard!

Steeper, darker!—lo! I felt
From my feet the pathway melt,
Swallowed by the black despair,
And the hungry jaws of air,

Past the stony-throated caves,
Strangled by the wash of waves,
Past the splintered crags, I sank
On a green and flowery bank,—

Soft as fall of thistle-down,
Lightly as a cloud is blown,
Soothingly as childhood pressed
To the bosom of its rest.

Of the sharp-horned rocks instead,
Green the grassy meadows spread,
Bright with waters singing by
Trees that propped a golden sky.

Painless, trustful, sorrow-free,
Old lost faces welcomed me,
With whose sweetness of content
Still expectant hope was blent.

Waking while the dawning gray
Slowly brightened into day,
Pondering that vision fled,
Thus unto myself I said:—

'Steep and hung with clouds of strife
Is our narrow path of life;
And our death the dreaded fall
Through the dark, awaiting all.

'So, with painful steps we climb
Up the dizzy ways of time,
Ever in the shadow shed
By the forecast of our dread.

'Dread of mystery solved alone,
Of the untried and unknown;
Yet the end thereof may seem
Like the falling of my dream.

'And this heart-consuming care,
All our fears of here or there,
Change and absence, loss and death,
Prove but simple lack of faith.'

Thou, O Most Compassionate!
Who didst stoop to our estate,
Drinking of the cup we drain,
Treading in our path of pain,—

Through the doubt and mystery,
Grant to us Thy steps to see,
And the grace to draw from thence
Larger hope and confidence.

Show Thy vacant tomb, and let,
As of old, the angels sit,
Whispering, by its open door:
'Fear not! He hath gone before!'

1855.

THE BAREFOOT BOY.

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;

With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye,—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy,—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread;
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

1855.

MY PSALM.

I MOURN no more my vanished years:
Beneath a tender rain,
An April rain of smiles and tears,
My heart is young again.

The west-winds blow, and, singing low,
I hear the glad streams run;
The windows of my soul I throw
Wide open to the sun.

No longer forward nor behind
I look in hope or fear;
But, grateful, take the good I find,
The best of now and here.

I plough no more a desert land,
To harvest weed and tare;
The manna dropping from God's hand
Rebukes my painful care.

I break my pilgrim staff, I lay
Aside the toiling oar;
The angel sought so far away
I welcome at my door.

The airs of spring may never play
Among the ripening corn,
Nor freshness of the flowers of May
Blow through the autumn morn;

Yet shall the blue-eyed gentian look
Through fringèd lids to heaven,
And the pale aster in the brook
Shall see its image given;—

The woods shall wear their robes of praise,
The south-wind softly sigh,
And sweet, calm days in golden haze
Melt down the amber sky.

Not less shall manly deed and word
Rebuke an age of wrong;
The graven flowers that wreathe the sword
Make not the blade less strong.

But smiting hands shall learn to heal,—
To build as to destroy;
Nor less my heart for others feel
That I the more enjoy.

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track;
That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved,
His chastening turned me back;

That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good;—

That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight;

That care and trial seem at last,
Through Memory's sunset air,
Like mountain-ranges overpast,
In purple distance fair;

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west-winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day.

1859.

THE WAITING.

I WAIT and watch: before my eyes
Methinks the night grows thin and gray;
I wait and watch the eastern skies
To see the golden spears uprise
Beneath the oriflamme of day!

Like one whose limbs are bound in trance
I hear the day-sounds swell and grow,
And see across the twilight glance,
Troop after troop, in swift advance,
The shining ones with plumes of snow!

I know the errand of their feet,
I know what mighty work is theirs;
I can but lift up hands unmeet,
The threshing-floors of God to beat,
And speed them with unworthy prayers.

I will not dream in vain despair
The steps of progress wait for me:
The puny leverage of a hair
The planet's impulse well may spare,
A drop of dew the tided sea.

The loss, if loss there be, is mine,
And yet not mine if understood;
For one shall grasp and one resign,
One drink life's rue, and one its wine,
And God shall make the balance good.

Oh power to do! Oh baffled will!
Oh prayer and action! ye are one.
Who may not strive, may yet fulfil
The harder task of standing still,
And good but wished with God is done!

1862.

SNOW-BOUND,

A WINTER IDYL.

TO THE MEMORY OF THE HOUSEHOLD IT DESCRIBES
THIS POEM IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR.

The inmates of the family at the Whittier homestead who are referred to in the poem were my father, mother, my brother and two sisters, and my uncle and aunt, both unmarried. In addition, there was the district schoolmaster, who boarded with us. The 'not unfeared, half-welcome guest' was Harriet Livermore, daughter of Judge Livermore, of New Hampshire, a young woman of fine natural ability, enthusiastic, eccentric, with slight control over her violent temper, which sometimes made her religious profession doubtful. She was equally ready to exhort in school-house prayer-meetings and dance in a Washington ball-room, while her father was a member of Congress. She early embraced the doctrine of the Second Advent, and felt it her duty to proclaim the Lord's speedy coming. With this message she crossed the Atlantic and spent the greater part of a long life in travelling over Europe and Asia. She lived some time with Lady Hester Stanhope, a woman as fantastic and mentally strained as herself, on the slope of Mt. Lebanon, but finally quarrelled with her in regard to two white horses with red marks on their backs which suggested the idea of saddles, on which her titled hostess expected to ride into Jerusalem with the Lord. A friend of mine found her, when quite an old woman, wandering in Syria with a tribe of Arabs, who with the Oriental notion that madness is inspiration, accepted her as their prophetess and leader. At the time referred to in *Snow-Bound* she was boarding at the Rocks Village, about two miles from us.

In my boyhood, in our lonely farm-house, we had scanty sources of information; few books and only a small weekly newspaper. Our only annual was the Almanac. Under such circumstances story-telling was a necessary resource in the long winter evenings. My father when a young man had traversed the wilderness to Canada, and could tell us of his adventures with Indians and wild beasts, and of his sojourn in the French villages. My uncle was ready with his record of hunting and fishing, and, it must be confessed, with stories which he at least half believed, of witchcraft and apparitions. My mother, who was born in the Indian-haunted region of Somersworth, New Hampshire, between Dover and Portsmouth, told us of the inroads of the savages, and the narrow escape of her ancestors. She described strange people who lived on the Piscataqua and Cocheco, among whom was Bantam the sorcerer. I have in my possession

the wizard's 'conjuring book,' which he solemnly opened when consulted. It is a copy of Cornelius Agrippa's *Magic*, printed in 1651, dedicated to Dr. Robert Child, who, like Michael Scott, had learned

'the art of glammorie
In Padua beyond the sea,'

and who is famous in the annals of Massachusetts, where he was at one time a resident, as the first man who dared petition the General Court for liberty of conscience. The full title of the book is *Three Books of Occult Philosophy, by Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Knight, Doctor of both Laws, Counsellor to Cæsar's Sacred Majesty and Judge of the Prerogative Court.*

'As the Spirits of Darkness be stronger in the dark, so Good Spirits, which be Angels of Light, are augmented not only by the Divine light of the Sun, but also by our common VVood Fire: and as the Celestial Fire drives away dark spirits, so also this our fire of VVood doth the same.'—Cor. Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*, Book I. ch. v.

'Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.'
Emerson. *The Snow Storm.*

The sun that brief December day
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,
And, darkly circled, gave at noon
A sadder light than waning moon.
Slow tracing down the thickening sky
Its mute and ominous prophecy,
A portent seeming less than threat,
It sank from sight before it set.
A chill no coat, however stout,
Of homespun stuff could quite shut out,
A hard, dull bitterness of cold,
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,
The coming of the snow-storm told.
The wind blew east; we heard the roar
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

Meanwhile we did our nightly chores,—
Brought in the wood from out of doors,
Littered the stalls, and from the mows
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows:
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,
Impatient down the stanchion rows
The cattle shake their walnut bows;
While, peering from his early perch
Upon the scaffold's pole of birch,
The cock his crested helmet bent
And down his querulous challenge sent.

Unwarmed by any sunset light
The gray day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the wingëd snow:
And ere the early bedtime came
The white drift piled the window-frame,
And through the glass the clothes-line posts
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts.

So all night long the storm roared on:
The morning broke without a sun;
In tiny spherule traced with lines
Of Nature's geometric signs,
In starry flake, and pellicle,
All day the hoary meteor fell;
And, when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown,
On nothing we could call our own.
Around the glistening wonder bent
The blue walls of the firmament,
No cloud above, no earth below,—
A universe of sky and snow!
The old familiar sights of ours
Took marvellous shapes; strange domes and towers
Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,
Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;
A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed,
A fenceless drift what once was road;
The bridle-post an old man sat
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;
The well-curb had a Chinese roof;
And even the long sweep, high aloof,

In its slant splendor, seemed to tell
Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

A prompt, decisive man, no breath
Our father wasted: 'Boys, a path!'
Well pleased, (for when did farmer boy
Count such a summons less than joy?)
Our buskins on our feet we drew;
With mittened hands, and caps drawn low,
To guard our necks and ears from snow,
We cut the solid whiteness through.
And, where the drift was deepest, made
A tunnel walled and overlaid
With dazzling crystal: we had read
Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,
And to our own his name we gave,
With many a wish the luck were ours
To test his lamp's supernal powers.
We reached the barn with merry din,
And roused the prisoned brutes within.
The old horse thrust his long head out,
And grave with wonder gazed about;
The cock his lusty greeting said,
And forth his speckled harem led;
The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,
And mild reproach of hunger looked;
The horned patriarch of the sheep,
Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep,
Shook his sage head with gesture mute,
And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore
The loosening drift its breath before;
Low circling round its southern zone,
The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.
No church-bell lent its Christian tone
To the savage air, no social smoke[62]
Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.
A solitude made more intense
By dreary-voiced elements,
The shrieking of the mindless wind,
The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,
And on the glass the unmeaning beat
Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.
Beyond the circle of our hearth
No welcome sound of toil or mirth
Unbound the spell, and testified
Of human life and thought outside.
We minded that the sharpest ear
The buried brooklet could not hear,
The music of whose liquid lip
Had been to us companionship,
And, in our lonely life, had grown
To have an almost human tone.

As night drew on, and, from the crest
Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,
The sun, a snow-blown traveller, sank
From sight beneath the smothering bank,
We piled, with care, our nightly stack
Of wood against the chimney-back,—
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,
And on its top the stout back-stick;
The knotty forestick laid apart,
And filled between with curious art
The ragged brush; then, hovering near,
We watched the first red blaze appear,
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
Until the old, rude-furnished room
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;
While radiant with a mimic flame
Outside the sparkling drift became,
And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree
Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.
The crane and pendent trammels showed,
The Turks' heads on the andirons glowed;
While childish fancy, prompt to tell
The meaning of the miracle,
Whispered the old rhyme: '*Under the tree,*
When fire outdoors burns merrily,
There the witches are making tea.'

The moon above the eastern wood
Shone at its full; the hill-range stood
Transfigured in the silver flood,
Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,
Dead white, save where some sharp ravine
Took shadow, or the sombre green
Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black
Against the whiteness at their back.
For such a world and such a night
Most fitting that unwarming light,
Which only seemed where'er it fell
To make the coldness visible.

Shut in from all the world without,
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
Content to let the north-wind roar
In baffled rage at pane and door,
While the red logs before us beat
The frost-line back with tropic heat;

And ever, when a louder blast
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,
The merrier up its roaring draught
The great throat of the chimney laughed;
The house-dog on his paws outspread
Laid to the fire his drowsy head,
The cat's dark silhouette on the wall
A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;
And, for the winter fireside meet,
Between the andirons' straddling feet,
The mug of cider simmered slow,
The apples sputtered in a row,
And, close at hand, the basket stood
With nuts from brown October's wood.

What matter how the night behaved?
What matter how the north-wind raved?
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
O Time and Change! — with hair as gray
As was my sire's that winter day,
How strange it seems, with so much gone
Of life and love, to still live on!
Ah, brother! only I and thou[63]
Are left of all that circle now,—
The dear home faces whereupon
That fitful firelight paled and shone.
Henceforward, listen as we will,
The voices of that hearth are still;
Look where we may, the wide earth o'er
Those lighted faces smile no more.
We tread the paths their feet have worn,
We sit beneath their orchard trees,
We hear, like them, the hum of bees
And rustle of the bladed corn;
We turn the pages that they read,
Their written words we linger o'er,
But in the sun they cast no shade,
No voice is heard, no sign is made,
No step is on the conscious floor!
Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust,
(Since He who knows our need is just,)
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!

We sped the time with stories old,
Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told,
Or stammered from our school-book lore
'The Chief of Gambia's golden shore.'[64]
How often since, when all the land
Was clay in Slavery's shaping hand,
As if a far-blown trumpet stirred
The languorous sin-sick air, I heard:
'Does not the voice of reason cry,
Claim the first right which Nature gave,
From the red scourge of bondage fly,
Nor deign to live a burdened slave!'
Our father rode again his ride
On Memphremagog's wooded side;
Sat down again to moose and samp
In trapper's hut and Indian camp;
Lived o'er the old idyllic ease
Beneath St. François' hemlock-trees;
Again for him the moonlight shone
On Norman cap and bodiced zone;
Again he heard the violin play
Which led the village dance away.
And mingled in its merry whirl
The grandam and the laughing girl.
Or, nearer home, our steps he led
Where Salisbury's level marshes spread
Mile-wide as flies the laden bee;
Where merry mowers, hale and strong,
Swept, scythe on scythe, their swaths along
The low green prairies of the sea.
We shared the fishing off Boar's Head,
And round the rocky Isles of Shoals
The hake-broil on the drift-wood coals;
The chowder on the sand-beach made,
Dipped by the hungry, steaming hot,
With spoons of clam-shell from the pot.
We heard the tales of witchcraft old,
And dream and sign and marvel told
To sleepy listeners as they lay
Stretched idly on the salted hay,
Adrift along the winding shores,
When favoring breezes deigned to blow
The square sail of the gundelow
And idle lay the useless oars.

Our mother, while she turned her wheel
Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,

Told how the Indian hordes came down
At midnight on Cocheco town,
And how her own great-uncle bore
His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.
Recalling, in her fitting phrase,
So rich and picturesque and free,
(The common unrhymed poetry
Of simple life and country ways,)
The story of her early days,—
She made us welcome to her home;
Old hearths grew wide to give us room;
We stole with her a frightened look
At the gray wizard's conjuring-book,
The fame whereof went far and wide
Through all the simple country side;
We heard the hawks at twilight play,
The boat-horn on Piscataqua,
The loon's weird laughter far away;
We fished her little trout-brook, knew
What flowers in wood and meadow grew,
What sunny hillsides autumn-brown
She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,
Saw where in sheltered cove and bay
The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,
And heard the wild-geese calling loud
Beneath the gray November cloud.

Then, haply, with a look more grave,
And soberer tone, some tale she gave
From painful Sewell's ancient tome,
Beloved in every Quaker home,
Of faith fire-winged by martyrdom,
Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint,[65]—
Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint!—
Who, when the dreary calms prevailed,
And water-butt and bread-cask failed,
And cruel, hungry eyes pursued
His portly presence mad for food,
With dark hints muttered under breath
Of casting lots for life or death,
Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies,
To be himself the sacrifice.
Then, suddenly, as if to save
The good man from his living grave,
A ripple on the water grew,
A school of porpoise flashed in view.
'Take, eat,' he said, 'and be content;
These fishes in my stead are sent
By Him who gave the tangled ram
To spare the child of Abraham.'

Our uncle, innocent of books,[66]
Was rich in lore of fields and brooks,
The ancient teachers never dumb
Of Nature's unhoused lyceum.
In moons and tides and weather wise,
He read the clouds as prophecies,
And foul or fair could well divine,
By many an occult hint and sign,
Holding the cunning-warded keys
To all the woodcraft mysteries;
Himself to Nature's heart so near
That all her voices in his ear
Of beast or bird had meanings clear,
Like Apollonius of old,
Who knew the tales the sparrows told,
Or Hermes who interpreted
What the sage cranes of Nilus said;
Content to live where life began;
A simple, guileless, childlike man,
Strong only on his native grounds,
The little world of sights and sounds
Whose girdle was the parish bounds,
Whereof his fondly partial pride
The common features magnified,
As Surrey hills to mountains grew
In White of Selborne's loving view,—
He told how teal and loon he shot,
And how the eagle's eggs he got,
The feats on pond and river done,
The prodigies of rod and gun;
Till, warming with the tales he told,
Forgotten was the outside cold,
The bitter wind unheeded blew,
From ripening corn the pigeons flew,
The partridge drummed i' the wood, the mink
Went fishing down the river-brink.
In fields with bean or clover gay,
The woodchuck, like a hermit gray,
Peered from the doorway of his cell;
The muskrat plied the mason's trade,
And tier by tier his mud-walls laid;
And from the shagbark overhead
The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell.

Next, the dear aunt, whose smile of cheer
And voice in dreams I see and hear,—
The sweetest woman ever Fate
Perverse denied a household mate,
Who, lonely, homeless, not the less
Found peace in love's unselfishness,
And welcome wheresoe'er she went,
A calm and gracious element,

Whose presence seemed the sweet income
And womanly atmosphere of home,—
Called up her girlhood memories,
The huskings and the apple-bees,
The sleigh-rides and the summer sails,
Weaving through all the poor details
And homespun warp of circumstance
A golden woof-thread of romance.
For well she kept her genial mood
And simple faith of maidenhood;
Before her still a cloud-land lay,
The mirage loomed across her way;
The morning dew, that dries so soon
With others, glistened at her noon;
Through years of toil and soil and care,
From glossy tress to thin gray hair,
All unprofaned she held apart
The virgin fancies of the heart.
Be shame to him of woman born
Who hath for such but thought of scorn.

There, too, our elder sister plied [67]
Her evening task the stand beside;
A full, rich nature, free to trust,
Truthful and almost sternly just,
Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,
And make her generous thought a fact,
Keeping with many a light disguise
The secret of self-sacrifice.
O heart sore-tried! thou hast the best
That Heaven itself could give thee,—rest,
Rest from all bitter thoughts and things!
How many a poor one's blessing went
With thee beneath the low green tent
Whose curtain never outward swings!

As one who held herself a part
Of all she saw, and let her heart
Against the household bosom lean,
Upon the motley-braided mat
Our youngest and our dearest sat,[68]
Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,
Now bathed in the unfading green
And holy peace of Paradise.
Oh, looking from some heavenly hill,
Or from the shade of saintly palms,
Or silver reach of river calms,
Do those large eyes behold me still?
With me one little year ago:—
The chill weight of the winter snow
For months upon her grave has lain;
And now, when summer south-winds blow
And brier and harebell bloom again,
I tread the pleasant paths we trod,
I see the violet-sprinkled sod
Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak
The hillside flowers she loved to seek,
Yet following me where'er I went
With dark eyes full of love's content.
The birds are glad; the brier-rose fills
The air with sweetness; all the hills
Stretch green to June's unclouded sky;
But still I wait with ear and eye
For something gone which should be nigh,
A loss in all familiar things,
In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.
And yet, dear heart! remembering thee,
Am I not richer than of old?
Safe in thy immortality,
What change can reach the wealth I hold?
What chance can mar the pearl and gold
Thy love hath left in trust with me?
And while in life's late afternoon,
Where cool and long the shadows grow,
I walk to meet the night that soon
Shall shape and shadow overflow,
I cannot feel that thou art far,
Since near at need the angels are;
And when the sunset gates unbar,
Shall I not see thee waiting stand,
And, white against the evening star,
The welcome of thy beckoning hand?

Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,
The master of the district school [69]
Held at the fire his favored place,
Its warm glow lit a laughing face
Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared
The uncertain prophecy of beard.
He teased the mitten-blinded cat,
Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat,
Sang songs, and told us what befalls
In classic Dartmouth's college halls.
Born the wild Northern hills among,
From whence his yeoman father wrung
By patient toil subsistence scant,
Not competence and yet not want,
He early gained the power to pay
His cheerful, self-reliant way;

Could doff at ease his scholar's gown
To peddle wares from town to town;
Or through the long vacation's reach
In lonely lowland districts teach,
Where all the droll experience found
At stranger hearths in boarding round.
The moonlit skater's keen delight,
The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,
The rustic party, with its rough
Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff,
And whirling-plate, and forfeits paid,
His winter task a pastime made.
Happy the snow-locked homes wherein
He tuned his merry violin,
Or played the athlete in the barn,
Or held the good dame's winding-yarn,
Or mirth-provoking versions told
Of classic legends rare and old,
Wherein the scenes of Greece and Rome
Had all the commonplace of home,
And little seemed at best the odds
'Twixt Yankee pedlers and old gods;
Where Pindus-born Arachthus took
The guise of any grist-mill brook,
And dread Olympus at his will
Became a huckleberry hill.

A careless boy that night he seemed;
But at his desk he had the look
And air of one who wisely schemed,
And hostage from the future took
In trainëd thought and lore of book.
Large-brained, clear-eyed, of such as he
Shall Freedom's young apostles be,
Who, following in War's bloody trail,
Shall every lingering wrong assail;
All chains from limb and spirit strike,
Uplift the black and white alike;
Scatter before their swift advance
The darkness and the ignorance,
The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth,
Which nurtured Treason's monstrous growth,
Made murder pastime, and the hell
Of prison-torture possible;
The cruel lie of caste refute,
Old forms remould, and substitute
For Slavery's lash the freeman's will,
For blind routine, wise-handed skill;
A school-house plant on every hill,
Stretching in radiate nerve-lines thence
The quick wires of intelligence;
Till North and South together brought
Shall own the same electric thought,
In peace a common flag salute,
And, side by side in labor's free
And unresentful rivalry,
Harvest the fields wherein they fought.

Another guest that winter night[70]
Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.
Unmarked by time, and yet not young,
The honeyed music of her tongue
And words of meekness scarcely told
A nature passionate and bold,
Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,
Its milder features dwarfed beside
Her unbent will's majestic pride.
She sat among us, at the best,
A not unfeared, half-welcome guest,
Rebuking with her cultured phrase
Our homeliness of words and ways.
A certain pard-like, treacherous grace
Swayed the lithe limbs and dropped the lash,
Lent the white teeth their dazzling flash;
And under low brows, black with night,
Rayed out at times a dangerous light;
The sharp heat-lightnings of her face
Presaging ill to him whom Fate
Condemned to share her love or hate.
A woman tropical, intense
In thought and act, in soul and sense,
She blended in a like degree
The vixen and the devotee,
Revealing with each freak or feint
The temper of Petruchio's Kate,
The raptures of Siena's saint.
Her tapering hand and rounded wrist
Had facile power to form a fist;
The warm, dark languish of her eyes
Was never safe from wrath's surprise.
Brows saintly calm and lips devout
Knew every change of scowl and pout;
And the sweet voice had notes more high
And shrill for social battle-cry.

Since then what old cathedral town
Has missed her pilgrim staff and gown,
What convent-gate has held its lock
Against the challenge of her knock?

Through Smyrna's plague-hushed thoroughfares,
Up sea-set Malta's rocky stairs,
Gray olive slopes of hills that hem
Thy tombs and shrines, Jerusalem,
Or startling on her desert throne
The crazy Queen of Lebanon[71]
With claims fantastic as her own,
Her tireless feet have held their way;
And still, unrestful, bowed, and gray,
She watches under Eastern skies,
With hope each day renewed and fresh,
The Lord's quick coming in the flesh,
Whereof she dreams and prophesies!

Where'er her troubled path may be,
The Lord's sweet pity with her go!
The outward wayward life we see,
The hidden springs we may not know.
Nor is it given us to discern
What threads the fatal sisters spun,
Through what ancestral years has run
The sorrow with the woman born,
What forged her cruel chain of moods,
What set her feet in solitudes,
And held the love within her mute,
What mingled madness in the blood,
A life-long discord and annoy,
Water of tears with oil of joy,
And hid within the folded bud
Perversities of flower and fruit.
It is not ours to separate
The tangled skein of will and fate,
To show what metes and bounds should stand
Upon the soul's debatable land,
And between choice and Providence
Divide the circle of events;
But He who knows our frame is just,
Merciful and compassionate,
And full of sweet assurances
And hope for all the language is,
That He remembereth we are dust!

At last the great logs, crumbling low,
Sent out a dull and duller glow,
The bull's-eye watch that hung in view,
Ticking its weary circuit through,
Pointed with mutely warning sign
Its black hand to the hour of nine.
That sign the pleasant circle broke:
My uncle ceased his pipe to smoke,
Knocked from its bowl the refuse gray,
And laid it tenderly away;
Then roused himself to safely cover
The dull red brands with ashes over.
And while, with care, our mother laid
The work aside, her steps she stayed
One moment, seeking to express
Her grateful sense of happiness
For food and shelter, warmth and health,
And love's contentment more than wealth,
With simple wishes (not the weak,
Vain prayers which no fulfilment seek,
But such as warm the generous heart,
O'er-prompt to do with Heaven its part)
That none might lack, that bitter night,
For bread and clothing, warmth and light.

Within our beds awhile we heard
The wind that round the gables roared,
With now and then a ruder shock,
Which made our very bedsteads rock.
We heard the loosened clapboards tost,
The board-nails snapping in the frost;
And on us, through the unplastered wall,
Felt the light sifted snow-flakes fall.
But sleep stole on, as sleep will do
When hearts are light and life is new;
Faint and more faint the murmurs grew,
Till in the summer-land of dreams
They softened to the sound of streams,
Low stir of leaves, and dip of oars,
And lapsing waves on quiet shores.

Next morn we wakened with the shout
Of merry voices high and clear;
And saw the teamsters drawing near
To break the drifted highways out.
Down the long hillside treading slow
We saw the half-buried oxen go,
Shaking the snow from heads uptost,
Their straining nostrils white with frost.
Before our door the straggling train
Drew up, an added team to gain.
The elders threshed their hands a-cold,
Passed, with the cider-mug, their jokes
From lip to lip; the younger folks
Down the loose snow-banks, wrestling, rolled,
Then toiled again the cavalcade
O'er windy hill, through clogged ravine,
And woodland paths that wound between

Low drooping pine-boughs winter-weighed.
From every barn a team afoot,
At every house a new recruit,
Where, drawn by Nature's subtlest law,
Haply the watchful young men saw
Sweet doorway pictures of the curls
And curious eyes of merry girls,
Lifting their hands in mock defence
Against the snow-ball's compliments,
And reading in each missive tost
The charm with Eden never lost.

We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound;
And, following where the teamsters led,
The wise old Doctor went his round,
Just pausing at our door to say,
In the brief autocratic way
Of one who, prompt at Duty's call,
Was free to urge her claim on all,
That some poor neighbor sick abed
At night our mother's aid would need.
For, one in generous thought and deed,
What mattered in the sufferer's sight
The Quaker matron's inward light,
The Doctor's mail of Calvin's creed?
All hearts confess the saints elect
Who, twain in faith, in love agree,
And melt not in an acid sect
The Christian pearl of charity!

So days went on: a week had passed
Since the great world was heard from last.
The Almanac we studied o'er,
Read and re-read our little store
Of books and pamphlets, scarce a score;
One harmless novel, mostly hid
From younger eyes, a book forbid,
And poetry, (or good or bad,
A single book was all we had,)
Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted Muse,
A stranger to the heathen Nine,
Sang, with a somewhat nasal whine,
The wars of David and the Jews.
At last the floundering carrier bore
The village paper to our door.
Lo! broadening outward as we read,
To warmer zones the horizon spread;
In panoramic length unrolled
We saw the marvels that it told.
Before us passed the painted Creeks,
And daft McGregor on his raids
In Costa Rica's everglades.
And up Taygetos winding slow
Rode Ypsilanti's Mainote Greeks,
A Turk's head at each saddle-bow!
Welcome to us its week-old news,
Its corner for the rustic Muse,
Its monthly gauge of snow and rain,
Its record, mingling in a breath
The wedding bell and dirge of death:
Jest, anecdote, and love-lorn tale,
The latest culprit sent to jail;
Its hue and cry of stolen and lost,
Its vendue sales and goods at cost,
And traffic calling loud for gain.
We felt the stir of hall and street,
The pulse of life that round us beat;
The chill embargo of the snow
Was melted in the genial glow;
Wide swung again our ice-locked door,
And all the world was ours once more!

Clasp, Angel of the backward look
And folded wings of ashen gray
And voice of echoes far away,
The brazen covers of thy book;
The weird palimpsest old and vast,
Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past;
Where, closely mingling, pale and glow
The characters of joy and woe;
The monographs of outlived years,
Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,
Green hills of life that slope to death,
And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees
Shade off to mournful cypresses
With the white amaranths underneath.
Even while I look, I can but heed
The restless sands' incessant fall,
Importunate hours that hours succeed,
Each clamorous with its own sharp need,
And duty keeping pace with all.
Shut down and clasp the heavy lids;
I hear again the voice that bids
The dreamer leave his dream midway
For larger hopes and graver fears:
Life greatens in these later years,
The century's aloe flowers to-day!

Yet, haply, in some lull of life,
Some Truce of God which breaks its strife,
The worldling's eyes shall gather dew,
Dreaming in throngful city ways
Of winter joys his boyhood knew;
And dear and early friends—the few
Who yet remain—shall pause to view
These Flemish pictures of old days;[72]
Sit with me by the homestead hearth,
And stretch the hands of memory forth
To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze!
And thanks untraced to lips unknown
Shall greet me like the odors blown
From unseen meadows newly mown,
Or lilies floating in some pond,
Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze beyond;
The traveller owns the grateful sense
Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,
And, pausing, takes with forehead bare
The benediction of the air.

1866.

MY TRIUMPH.

The autumn-time has come;
On woods that dream of bloom,
And over purpling vines,
The low sun fainter shines.

The aster-flower is failing,
The hazel's gold is paling;
Yet overhead more near
The eternal stars appear!

And present gratitude
Insures the future's good,
And for the things I see
I trust the things to be;

That in the paths untrod,
And the long days of God,
My feet shall still be led,
My heart be comforted.

O living friends who love me!
O dear ones gone above me!
Careless of other fame,
I leave to you my name.

Hide it from idle praises,
Save it from evil phrases:
Why, when dear lips that spake it
Are dumb, should strangers wake it?

Let the thick curtain fall;
I better know than all
How little I have gained,
How vast the unattained.

Not by the page word-painted
Let life be banned or sainted:
Deeper than written scroll
The colors of the soul.

Sweeter than any sung
My songs that found no tongue;
Nobler than any fact
My wish that failed of act.

Others shall sing the song,
Others shall right the wrong,—
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win.

What matter, I or they?
Mine or another's day,
So the right word be said
And life the sweeter made?

Hail to the coming singers!
Hail to the brave light-bringers!
Forward I reach and share
All that they sing and dare.

The airs of heaven blow o'er me;
A glory shines before me
Of what mankind shall be,—
Pure, generous, brave, and free.

A dream of man and woman
Diviner but still human,
Solving the riddle old,
Shaping the Age of Gold!

The love of God and neighbor;
An equal-handed labor;
The richer life, where beauty
Walks hand in hand with duty.

Ring, bells in unreared steeples,
The joy of unborn peoples!
Sound, trumpets far off blown,
Your triumph is my own!

Parcel and part of all,
I keep the festival,
Fore-reach the good to be,
And share the victory.

I feel the earth move sunward,
I join the great march onward,
And take, by faith, while living,
My freehold of thanksgiving.

1870.

IN SCHOOL-DAYS.

Still sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sleeping;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescos on its wall;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favor singled:
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered;—
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

'I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because,'—the brown eyes lower fell,—
'Because, you see, I love you!'

Still memory to a gray-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her,—because they love him.

1870.

MY BIRTHDAY.

Beneath the moonlight and the snow
Lies dead my latest year;
The winter winds are wailing low
Its dirges in my ear.

I grieve not with the moaning wind
As if a loss befell;
Before me, even as behind,
God is, and all is well!

His light shines on me from above,
His low voice speaks within,—
The patience of immortal love
Outwearying mortal sin.

Not mindless of the growing years
Of care and loss and pain,
My eyes are wet with thankful tears
For blessings which remain.

If dim the gold of life has grown,
I will not count it dross,
Nor turn from treasures still my own
To sigh for lack and loss.

The years no charm from Nature take;
As sweet her voices call,
As beautiful her mornings break,
As fair her evenings fall.

Love watches o'er my quiet ways,
Kind voices speak my name,
And lips that find it hard to praise
Are slow, at least, to blame.

How softly ebb the tides of will!
How fields, once lost or won,
Now lie behind me green and still
Beneath a level sun!

How hushed the hiss of party hate,
The clamor of the throng!
How old, harsh voices of debate
Flow into rhythmic song!

Methinks the spirit's temper grows
Too soft in this still air;
Somewhat the restful heart foregoes
Of needed watch and prayer.

The bark by tempest vainly tossed
May founder in the calm,
And he who braved the polar frost
Faint by the isles of balm.

Better than self-indulgent years
The outflung heart of youth,
Than pleasant songs in idle ears
The tumult of the truth.

Rest for the weary hands is good,
And love for hearts that pine,
But let the manly habitude
Of upright souls be mine.

Let winds that blow from heaven refresh,
Dear Lord, the languid air;
And let the weakness of the flesh
Thy strength of spirit share.

And, if the eye must fail of light,
The ear forget to hear,
Make clearer still the spirit's sight,
More fine the inward ear!

Be near me in mine hours of need
To soothe, or cheer, or warn,
And down these slopes of sunset lead
As up the hills of morn!

1871.

RED RIDING-HOOD.

On the wide lawn the snow lay deep,
Ridged o'er with many a drifted heap;
The wind that through the pine-trees sung
The naked elm-boughs tossed and swung;
While, through the window, frosty-starred,
Against the sunset purple barred,
We saw the sombre crow flap by,
The hawk's gray fleck along the sky,
The crested blue-jay flitting swift,
The squirrel poising on the drift,
Erect, alert, his broad gray tail
Set to the north wind like a sail.

It came to pass, our little lass,
With flattened face against the glass,
And eyes in which the tender dew
Of pity shone, stood gazing through
The narrow space her rosy lips
Had melted from the frost's eclipse:
'Oh, see,' she cried, 'the poor blue-jays!
What is it that the black crow says?
The squirrel lifts his little legs
Because he has no hands, and begs;
He 's asking for my nuts, I know:
May I not feed them on the snow?'

Half lost within her boots, her head
Warm-sheltered in her hood of red,
Her plaid skirt close about her drawn,
She floundered down the wintry lawn;
Now struggling through the misty veil
Blown round her by the shrieking gale;
Now sinking in a drift so low
Her scarlet hood could scarcely show
Its dash of color on the snow.

She dropped for bird and beast forlorn
Her little store of nuts and corn,
And thus her timid guests bespoke:
'Come, squirrel, from your hollow oak,—
Come, black old crow,—come, poor blue-jay,
Before your supper 's blown away!
Don't be afraid, we all are good;
And I 'm mamma's Red Riding-Hood!'

O Thou whose care is over all,
Who heedest even the sparrow's fall,
Keep in the little maiden's breast
The pity which is now its guest!
Let not her cultured years make less
The childhood charm of tenderness,
But let her feel as well as know,
Nor harder with her polish grow!
Unmoved by sentimental grief
That wails along some printed leaf,

But, prompt with kindly word and deed
To own the claims of all who need,
Let the grown woman's self make good
The promise of Red Riding-Hood!

1877.

RESPONSE.

On the occasion of my seventieth birthday, in 1877, I was the recipient of many tokens of esteem. The publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly* gave a dinner in my name, and the editor of *The Literary World* gathered in his paper many affectionate messages from my associates in literature and the cause of human progress. The lines which follow were written in acknowledgment.

BESIDE that milestone where the level sun,
Nigh unto setting, sheds his last, low rays
On word and work irrevocably done,
Life's blending threads of good and ill outspun,
I hear, O friends! your words of cheer and praise,
Half doubtful if myself or otherwise.
Like him who, in the old Arabian joke,
A beggar slept and crownëd Caliph woke.
Thanks not the less. With not unglad surprise
I see my life-work through your partial eyes;
Assured, in giving to my home-taught songs
A higher value than of right belongs,
You do but read between the written lines
The finer grace of unfulfilled designs.

AT EVENTIDE.

POOR and inadequate the shadow-play
Of gain and loss, of waking and of dream,
Against life's solemn background needs must seem
At this late hour. Yet, not unthankfully,
I call to mind the fountains by the way,
The breath of flowers, the bird-song on the spray,
Dear friends, sweet human loves, the joy of giving
And of receiving, the great boon of living
In grand historic years when Liberty
Had need of word and work, quick sympathies
For all who fail and suffer, song's relief,
Nature's uncloying loveliness; and chief,
The kind restraining hand of Providence,
The inward witness, the assuring sense
Of an Eternal Good which overlies
The sorrow of the world, Love which outlives
All sin and wrong, Compassion which forgives
To the uttermost, and Justice whose clear eyes
Through lapse and failure look to the intent,
And judge our frailty by the life we meant.

1878.

VOYAGE OF THE JETTIE.

The picturesquely situated Wayside Inn at West Ossipee, N. H., is now in ashes; and to its former guests these somewhat careless rhymes may be a not unwelcome reminder of pleasant summers and autumns on the banks of the Bearcamp and Chocorua. To the author himself they have a special interest from the fact that they were written, or improvised, under the eye and for the amusement of a beloved invalid friend, whose last earthly sunsets faded from the mountain ranges of Ossipee and Sandwich.

A SHALLOW stream, from fountains
Deep in the Sandwich mountains,
Ran lakeward Bearcamp River;
And between its flood-torn shores,
Sped by sail or urged by oars,
No keel had vexed it ever.

Alone the dead trees yielding
To the dull axe Time is wielding,
The shy mink and the otter,
And golden leaves and red,
By countless autumns shed,
Had floated down its water.

From the gray rocks of Cape Ann,
Came a skilled seafaring man,
With his dory, to the right place;
Over hill and plain he brought her,
Where the boatless Bearcamp water
Comes winding down from White-Face.

Quoth the skipper: 'Ere she floats forth,
I'm sure my pretty boat 's worth,
At least, a name as pretty.'
On her painted side he wrote it,
And the flag that o'er her floated
Bore aloft the name of Jettie.

On a radiant morn of summer,
Elder guest and latest comer
Saw her wed the Bearcamp water;
Heard the name the skipper gave her,
And the answer to the favor
From the Bay State's graceful daughter.[73]

Then a singer, richly gifted,
Her charmëd voice uplifted;
And the wood-thrush and song-sparrow
Listened, dumb with envious pain,
To the clear and sweet refrain
Whose notes they could not borrow.

Then the skipper plied his oar,
And from off the shelving shore,
Glided out the strange explorer;
Floating on, she knew not whither,—
The tawny sands beneath her,
The great hills watching o'er her.

On, where the stream flows quiet
As the meadows' margins by it,
Or widens out to borrow a
New life from that wild water,
The mountain giant's daughter,
The pine-besung Chocorua.

Or, mid the tangling cumber
And pack of mountain lumber
That spring floods downward force,
Over sunken snag, and bar
Where the grating shallows are,
The good boat held her course.

Under the pine-dark highlands,
Around the vine-hung islands,
She ploughed her crooked furrow;
And her rippling and her lurches
Scared the river eels and perches,
And the musk-rat in his burrow.

Every sober clam below her,
Every sage and grave pearl-grower,
Shut his rusty valves the tighter;
Crow called to crow complaining,
And old tortoises sat craning
Their leathern necks to sight her.

So, to where the still lake glasses
The misty mountain masses
Rising dim and distant northward,
And, with faint-drawn shadow pictures,
Low shores, and dead pine spectres,
Blends the skyward and the earthward,

On she glided, overladen,
With merry man and maiden
Sending back their song and laughter,—
While, perchance, a phantom crew,
In a ghostly birch canoe,
Paddled dumb and swiftly after!

And the bear on Ossipee
Climbed the topmost crag to see
The strange thing drifting under;
And, through the haze of August,
Passaconaway and Paugus
Looked down in sleepy wonder.

All the pines that o'er her hung
In mimic sea-tones sung
The song familiar to her;
And the maples leaned to screen her,
And the meadow-grass seemed greener,
And the breeze more soft to woo her.

The lone stream mystery-haunted
To her the freedom granted
To scan its every feature,
Till new and old were blended,
And round them both extended
The loving arms of Nature.

Of these hills the little vessel
Henceforth is part and parcel;
And on Bearcamp shall her log
Be kept, as if by George's
Or Grand Menàn, the surges
Tossed her skipper through the fog.

And I, who, half in sadness,
Recall the morning gladness
Of life, at evening time,
By chance, onlooking idly,
Apart from all so widely,
Have set her voyage to rhyme.

Dies now the gay persistence
Of song and laugh, in distance;
Alone with me remaining
The stream, the quiet meadow,
The hills in shine and shadow,
The sombre pines complaining.

And, musing here, I dream
Of voyagers on a stream
From whence is no returning,
Under sealëd orders going,
Looking forward little knowing,
Looking back with idle yearning.

And I pray that every venture
The port of peace may enter,
That, safe from snag and fall
And siren-haunted islet,
And rock, the Unseen Pilot
May guide us one and all.

1880.

MY TRUST.

A PICTURE memory brings to me:
I look across the years and see
Myself beside my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain
My selfish moods, and know again
A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man gray grown,
My childhood's needs are better known,
My mother's chastening love I own.

Gray grown, but in our Father's sight
A child still groping for the light
To read His works and ways aright.

I wait, in His good time to see
That as my mother dealt with me
So with His children dealeth He.

I bow myself beneath His hand:
That pain itself was wisely planned
I feel, and partly understand.

The joy that comes in sorrow's guise,
The sweet pains of self-sacrifice,
I would not have them otherwise.

And what were life and death if sin
Knew not the dread rebuke within,
The pang of merciful discipline?

Not with thy proud despair of old,
Crowned stoic of Rome's noblest mould!
Pleasure and pain alike I hold.

I suffer with no vain pretence
Of triumph over flesh and sense,
Yet trust the grievous providence,

How dark soe'er it seems, may tend,
By ways I cannot comprehend,
To some unguessed benignant end;

That every loss and lapse may gain
The clear-aired heights by steps of pain,
And never cross is borne in vain.

1880.

A NAME.

Addressed to my grand-nephew, Greenleaf Whittier Pickard. Jonathan Greenleaf, in *A Genealogy of the Greenleaf Family*, says briefly: 'From all that can be gathered, it is believed that the ancestors of the Greenleaf family were Huguenots, who left France on account of their religious principles some time in the course of the sixteenth century, and settled in England. The name was probably translated from the French Feuillevert.'

THE name the Gallic exile bore,
St. Malo! from thy ancient mart,
Became upon our Western shore
Greenleaf for Feuillevert.

A name to hear in soft accord
Of leaves by light winds overrun,
Or read, upon the greening sward
Of May, in shade and sun.

The name my infant ear first heard
Breathed softly with a mother's kiss;
His mother's own, no tenderer word
My father spake than this.

No child have I to bear it on;
Be thou its keeper; let it take
From gifts well used and duty done
New beauty for thy sake.

The fair ideals that outran
My halting footsteps seek and find—
The flawless symmetry of man,
The poise of heart and mind.

Stand firmly where I felt the sway
Of every wing that fancy flew,
See clearly where I groped my way,
Nor real from seeming knew.

And wisely choose, and bravely hold
Thy faith unswerved by cross or crown,
Like the stout Huguenot of old
Whose name to thee comes down.

As Marot's songs made glad the heart
Of that lone exile, haply mine
May in life's heavy hours impart
Some strength and hope to thine.

Yet when did Age transfer to Youth
The hard-gained lessons of its day?
Each lip must learn the taste of truth,
Each foot must feel its way.

We cannot hold the hands of choice
That touch or shun life's fateful keys;
The whisper of the inward voice
Is more than homilies.

Dear boy! for whom the flowers are born,
Stars shine, and happy song-birds sing,
What can my evening give to morn,
My winter to thy spring!

A life not void of pure intent,
With small desert of praise or blame,
The love I felt, the good I meant,
I leave thee with my name.

1880.

GREETING.

Originally prefixed to the volume, *The King's Missive and other Poems.* [Entitled there, *The Prelude.*]

I SPREAD a scanty board too late;
The old-time guests for whom I wait
Come few and slow, methinks, to-day.
Ah! who could hear my messages
Across the dim unsounded seas
On which so many have sailed away!

Come, then, old friends, who linger yet,
And let us meet, as we have met,
Once more beneath this low sunshine;
And grateful for the good we 've known,
The riddles solved, the ills outgrown,
Shake hands upon the border line.

The favor, asked too oft before,
From your indulgent ears, once more
I crave, and, if belated lays
To slower, feebler measures move,
The silent sympathy of love
To me is dearer now than praise.

And ye, O younger friends, for whom
My hearth and heart keep open room,
Come smiling through the shadows long,
Be with me while the sun goes down,
And with your cheerful voices drown
The minor of my even-song,

For, equal through the day and night,
The wise Eternal oversight
And love and power and righteous will
Remain: the law of destiny
The best for each and all must be,
And life its promise shall fulfil.

1881.

AN AUTOGRAPH.

I WRITE my name as one,
On sands by waves o'errun
Or winter's frosted pane,
Traces a record vain.

Oblivion's blankness claims
Wiser and better names,
And well my own may pass
As from the strand or glass.

Wash on, O waves of time!
Melt, noons, the frosty rime!
Welcome the shadow vast,
The silence that shall last!

When I and all who know
And love me vanish so,
What harm to them or me
Will the lost memory be?

If any words of mine,
Through right of life divine,
Remain, what matters it
Whose hand the message writ?

Why should the 'crowner's quest'
Sit on my worst or best?
Why should the showman claim
The poor ghost of my name?

Yet, as when dies a sound
Its spectre lingers round,
Haply my spent life will
Leave some faint echo still.

A whisper giving breath
Of praise or blame to death,
Soothing or saddening such
As loved the living much.

Therefore with yearnings vain
And fond I still would fain
A kindly judgment seek,
A tender thought bespeak.

And, while my words are read,
Let this at least be said:
'Whate'er his life's defeatures,
He loved his fellow-creatures.

'If, of the Law's stone table,
To hold he scarce was able
The first great precept fast,
He kept for man the last.

'Through mortal lapse and dulness
What lacks the Eternal Fulness,
If still our weakness can
Love Him in loving man?

'Age brought him no despairing
Of the world's future faring;
In human nature still
He found more good than ill.

'To all who dumbly suffered,
His tongue and pen he offered;
His life was not his own,
Nor lived for self alone.

'Hater of din and riot
He lived in days unquiet;
And, lover of all beauty,
Trod the hard ways of duty.

'He meant no wrong to any
He sought the good of many,
Yet knew both sin and folly,—
May God forgive him wholly!'

1882.

ABRAM MORRISON.

'MIDST the men and things which will
Haunt an old man's memory still,
Drollest, quaintest of them all,
With a boy's laugh I recall
Good old Abram Morrison.

When the Grist and Rolling Mill
Ground and rumbled by Po Hill,
And the old red school-house stood
Midway in the Powow's flood,
Here dwelt Abram Morrison.

From the Beach to far beyond
Bear-Hill, Lion's Mouth and Pond,
Marvellous to our tough old stock,
Chips o' the Anglo-Saxon block,
Seemed the Celtic Morrison.

Mudknock, Balmawhistle, all
Only knew the Yankee drawl,
Never brogue was heard till when,
Foremost of his countrymen,
Hither came Friend Morrison;

Yankee born, of alien blood,
Kin of his had well withstood
Pope and King with pike and ball
Under Derry's leaguered wall,
As became the Morrisons.

Wandering down from Nutfield woods
With his household and his goods,
Never was it clearly told
How within our quiet fold
Came to be a Morrison.

Once a soldier, blame him not
That the Quaker he forgot,
When, to think of battles won,
And the red-coats on the run,
Laughed aloud Friend Morrison.

From gray Lewis over sea
Bore his sires their family tree,
On the rugged boughs of it
Grafting Irish mirth and wit,
And the brogue of Morrison.

Half a genius, quick to plan,
Blundering like an Irishman,
But with canny shrewdness lent
By his far-off Scotch descent,
Such was Abram Morrison.

Back and forth to daily meals,
Rode his cherished pig on wheels,
And to all who came to see:
'Aisier for the pig an' me,
Sure it is,' said Morrison.

Simple-hearted, boy o'er-grown,
With a humor quite his own,
Of our sober-stepping ways,
Speech and look and cautious phrase,
Slow to learn was Morrison.

Much we loved his stories told
Of a country strange and old,
Where the fairies danced till dawn,
And the goblin Leprecaun
Looked, we thought, like Morrison.

Or wild tales of feud and fight,
Witch and troll and second sight
Whispered still where Stornoway
Looks across its stormy bay,
Once the home of Morrisons.

First was he to sing the praise
Of the Powow's winding ways;
And our straggling village took
City grandeur to the look
Of its poet Morrison.

All his words have perished. Shame
On the saddle-bags of Fame,
That they bring not to our time
One poor couplet of the rhyme
Made by Abram Morrison!

When, on calm and fair First Days,
Rattled down our one-horse chaise,
Through the blossomed apple-boughs
To the old brown meeting-house,
There was Abram Morrison.

Underneath his hat's broad brim
Peered the queer old face of him;
And with Irish jauntiness
Swung the coat-tails of the dress
Worn by Abram Morrison.

Still, in memory, on his feet,
Leaning o'er the elders' seat,
Mingling with a solemn drone,
Celtic accents all his own,
Rises Abram Morrison.

'Don't,' he 's pleading, 'don't ye go,
Dear young friends, to sight and show;
Don't run after elephants,
Learned pigs and presidents
And the likes!' said Morrison.

On his well-worn theme intent,
Simple, child-like, innocent,
Heaven forgive the half-checked smile
Of our careless boyhood, while
Listening to Friend Morrison!

We have learned in later days
Truth may speak in simplest phrase;
That the man is not the less
For quaint ways and home-spun dress,
Thanks to Abram Morrison!

Not to pander nor to please
Come the needed homilies,
With no lofty argument
Is the fitting message sent,
Through such lips as Morrison's.

Dead and gone! But while its track
Powow keeps to Merrimac,
While Po Hill is still on guard,
Looking land and ocean ward,
They shall tell of Morrison!

After half a century's lapse,
We are wiser now, perhaps,
But we miss our streets amid
Something which the past has hid,
Lost with Abram Morrison.

Gone forever with the queer
Characters of that old year!
Now the many are as one;
Broken is the mould that run
Men like Abram Morrison.

1884.

A LEGACY.

FRIEND of my many years!
When the great silence falls, at last, on me,
Let me not leave, to pain and sadden thee,
A memory of tears,

But pleasant thoughts alone
Of one who was thy friendship's honored guest
And drank the wine of consolation pressed
From sorrows of thy own.

I leave with thee a sense
Of hands upheld and trials rendered less—
The unselfish joy which is to helpfulness
Its own great recompense;

The knowledge that from thine,
As from the garments of the Master, stole
Calmness and strength, the virtue which makes whole
And heals without a sign;

Yea more, the assurance strong
That love, which fails of perfect utterance here,
Lives on to fill the heavenly atmosphere
With its immortal song.

1887.

Religious Poems

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

WHERE Time the measure of his hours
By changeful bud and blossom keeps,
And, like a young bride crowned with flowers,
Fair Shiraz in her garden sleeps;

Where, to her poet's turban stone,
The Spring her gift of flowers imparts,
Less sweet than those his thoughts have sown
In the warm soil of Persian hearts:

There sat the stranger, where the shade
Of scattered date-trees thinly lay,
While in the hot clear heaven delayed
The long and still and weary day.

Strange trees and fruits above him hung,
Strange odors filled the sultry air,
Strange birds upon the branches swung,
Strange insect voices murmured there.

And strange bright blossoms shone around,
Turned sunward from the shadowy bowers,
As if the Gheber's soul had found
A fitting home in Iran's flowers.

Whate'er he saw, whate'er he heard,
Awakened feelings new and sad,—
No Christian garb, nor Christian word,
Nor church with Sabbath-bell chimes glad.

But Moslem graves, with turban stones,
And mosque-spires gleaming white, in view,
And graybeard Mollahs in low tones
Chanting their Koran service through.

The flowers which smiled on either hand,
Like tempting fiends, were such as they
Which once, o'er all that Eastern land,
As gifts on demon altars lay.

As if the burning eye of Baal
The servant of his Conqueror knew,
From skies which knew no cloudy veil,
The Sun's hot glances smote him through.

'Ah me!' the lonely stranger said,
'The hope which led my footsteps on,
And light from heaven around them shed,
O'er weary wave and waste, is gone!

'Where are the harvest fields all white,
For Truth to thrust her sickle in?
Where flock the souls, like doves in flight,
From the dark hiding-place of sin?

'A silent horror broods o'er all,—
The burden of a hateful spell,—
The very flowers around recall
The hoary magi's rites of hell!

'And what am I, o'er such a land
The banner of the Cross to bear?
Dear Lord, uphold me with Thy hand,
Thy strength with human weakness share!'

He ceased; for at his very feet
In mild rebuke a floweret smiled;
How thrilled his sinking heart to greet
The Star-flower of the Virgin's child!

Sown by some wandering Frank, it drew
Its life from alien air and earth,
And told to Paynim sun and dew
The story of the Saviour's birth.

From scorching beams, in kindly mood,
The Persian plants its beauty screened,
And on its pagan sisterhood,
In love, the Christian floweret leaned.

With tears of joy the wanderer felt
The darkness of his long despair
Before that hallowed symbol melt,
Which God's dear love had nurtured there.

From Nature's face, that simple flower
The lines of sin and sadness swept;
And Magian pile and Paynim bower
In peace like that of Eden slept.

Each Moslem tomb, and cypress old,
Looked holy through the sunset air;
And, angel-like, the Muezzin told
From tower and mosque the hour of prayer.

With cheerful steps, the morrow's dawn
From Shiraz saw the stranger part;
The Star-flower of the Virgin-Born
Still blooming in his hopeful heart!

1830.

THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

'Get ye up from the wrath of God's terrible day!
Ungirded, unsandalled, arise and away!
'Tis the vintage of blood, 'tis the fulness of time,
And vengeance shall gather the harvest of crime!'

The warning was spoken—the righteous had gone,
And the proud ones of Sodom were feasting alone;
All gay was the banquet—the revel was long,
With the pouring of wine and the breathing of song.

'T was an evening of beauty; the air was perfume,
The earth was all greenness, the trees were all bloom;
And softly the delicate viol was heard,
Like the murmur of love or the notes of a bird.

And beautiful maidens moved down in the dance,
With the magic of motion and sunshine of glance;
And white arms wreathed lightly, and tresses fell free
As the plumage of birds in some tropical tree.

Where the shrines of foul idols were lighted on high,
And wantonness tempted the lust of the eye;
Midst rites of obsceneness, strange, loathsome, abhorred,
The blasphemer scoffed at the name of the Lord.

Hark! the growl of the thunder,—the quaking of earth!
Woe, woe to the worship, and woe to the mirth!
The black sky has opened; there 's flame in the air;
The red arm of vengeance is lifted and bare!

Then the shriek of the dying rose wild where the song
And the low tone of love had been whispered along;
For the fierce flames went lightly o'er palace and bower,
Like the red tongues of demons, to blast and devour!

Down, down on the fallen the red ruin rained,
And the reveller sank with his wine-cup undrained;
The foot of the dancer, the music's loved thrill,
And the shout and the laughter grew suddenly still.

The last throb of anguish was fearfully given;
The last eye glared forth in its madness on Heaven!
The last groan of horror rose wildly and vain,
And death brooded over the pride of the Plain!

1831.

THE CALL OF THE CHRISTIAN.

Not always as the whirlwind's rush
On Horeb's mount of fear,
Not always as the burning bush
To Midian's shepherd seer,
Nor as the awful voice which came
To Israel's prophet bards,
Nor as the tongues of cloven flame,
Nor gift of fearful words,—

Not always thus, with outward sign
Of fire or voice from Heaven,
The message of a truth divine,
The call of God is given!
Awaking in the human heart
Love for the true and right,—
Zeal for the Christian's better part,
Strength for the Christian's fight.

Nor unto manhood's heart alone
The holy influence steals:
Warm with a rapture not its own,
The heart of woman feels!
As she who by Samaria's wall
The Saviour's errand sought,—
As those who with the fervent Paul
And meek Aquila wrought:

Or those meek ones whose martyrdom
Rome's gathered grandeur saw:
Or those who in their Alpine home
Braved the Crusader's war,
When the green Vaudois, trembling, heard,
Through all its vales of death,
The martyr's song of triumph poured
From woman's failing breath.

And gently, by a thousand things
Which o'er our spirits pass,
Like breezes o'er the harp's fine strings,
Or vapors o'er a glass,
Leaving their token strange and new
Of music or of shade,
The summons to the right and true
And merciful is made.

Oh, then, if gleams of truth and light
Flash o'er thy waiting mind,
Unfolding to thy mental sight
The wants of human-kind;
If, brooding over human grief,
The earnest wish is known
To soothe and gladden with relief
An anguish not thine own;

Though heralded with naught of fear,
Or outward sign or show;
Though only to the inward ear
It whispers soft and low;
Though dropping, as the manna fell,
Unseen, yet from above,
Noiseless as dew-fall, heed it well,—
Thy Father's call of love!

1833.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

Sunlight upon Judæa's hills!
And on the waves of Galilee;
On Jordan's stream, and on the rills
That feed the dead and sleeping sea!
Most freshly from the green wood springs
The light breeze on its scented wings;
And gayly quiver in the sun
The cedar tops of Lebanon!

A few more hours,—a change hath come!
The sky is dark without a cloud!
The shouts of wrath and joy are dumb,
And proud knees unto earth are bowed.
A change is on the hill of Death,
The helmëd watchers pant for breath,
And turn with wild and maniac eyes
From the dark scene of sacrifice!

That Sacrifice!—the death of Him,—
The Christ of God, the holy One!
Well may the conscious Heaven grow dim,
And blacken the beholding Sun.
The wonted light hath fled away,
Night settles on the middle day,
And earthquake from his caverned bed
Is waking with a thrill of dread!

The dead are waking underneath!
Their prison door is rent away!
And, ghastly with the seal of death,
They wander in the eye of day!
The temple of the Cherubim,
The House of God is cold and dim;
A curse is on its trembling walls,
Its mighty veil asunder falls!

Well may the cavern-depths of Earth
Be shaken, and her mountains nod;
Well may the sheeted dead come forth
To see the suffering Son of God!
Well may the temple-shrine grow dim,
And shadows veil the Cherubim,
When He, the chosen one of Heaven,
A sacrifice for guilt is given!

And shall the sinful heart, alone,
Behold unmoved the fearful hour,
When Nature trembled on her throne,
And Death resigned his iron power?
Oh, shall the heart—whose sinfulness
Gave keenness to His sore distress,
And added to His tears of blood—
Refuse its trembling gratitude!

1834.

PALESTINE.

Blest land of Judæa! thrice hallowed of song,
Where the holiest of memories pilgrim-like throng;
In the shade of thy palms, by the shores of thy sea,
On the hills of thy beauty, my heart is with thee.

With the eye of a spirit I look on that shore
Where pilgrim and prophet have lingered before;
With the glide of a spirit I traverse the sod
Made bright by the steps of the angels of God.

Blue sea of the hills! in my spirit I hear
Thy waters, Gennesaret, chime on my ear;
Where the Lowly and Just with the people sat down,
And thy spray on the dust of His sandals was thrown.

Beyond are Bethulia's mountains of green,
And the desolate hills of the wild Gadarene;
And I pause on the goat-crags of Tabor to see
The gleam of thy waters, O dark Galilee!

Hark, a sound in the valley! where, swollen and strong,
Thy river, O Kishon, is sweeping along;
Where the Canaanite strove with Jehovah in vain,
And thy torrent grew dark with the blood of the slain.

There down from his mountains stern Zebulon came,
And Naphthali's stag, with his eyeballs of flame,
And the chariots of Jabin rolled harmlessly on,
For the arm of the Lord was Abinoam's son!

There sleep the still rocks and the caverns which rang
To the song which the beautiful prophetess sang,
When the princes of Issachar stood by her side,
And the shout of a host in its triumph replied.

Lo, Bethlehem's hill-site before me is seen,
With the mountains around, and the valleys between;
There rested the shepherds of Judah, and there
The song of the angels rose sweet on the air.

And Bethany's palm-trees in beauty still throw
Their shadows at noon on the ruins below;
But where are the sisters who hastened to greet
The lowly Redeemer, and sit at His feet?

I tread where the twelve in their wayfaring trod;
I stand where they stood with the chosen of God—
Where His blessing was heard and His lessons were taught,
Where the blind were restored and the healing was wrought.

Oh, here with His flock the sad Wanderer came;
These hills He toiled over in grief are the same;
The founts where He drank by the wayside still flow,
And the same airs are blowing which breathed on His brow!

And throned on her hills sits Jerusalem yet,
But with dust on her forehead, and chains on her feet;
For the crown of her pride to the mocker hath gone,
And the holy Shechinah is dark where it shone.

But wherefore this dream of the earthly abode
Of Humanity clothed in the brightness of God?
Were my spirit but turned from the outward and dim,
It could gaze, even now, on the presence of Him!

Not in clouds and in terrors, but gentle as when,
In love and in meekness, He moved among men:
And the voice which breathed peace to the waves of the sea
In the hush of my spirit would whisper to me!

And what if my feet may not tread where He stood,
Nor my ears hear the dashing of Galilee's flood,
Nor my eyes see the cross which He bowed Him to bear,
Nor my knees press Gethsemane's garden of prayer.

Yet, Loved of the Father, Thy Spirit is near
To the meek, and the lowly, and penitent here;
And the voice of Thy love is the same even now
As at Bethany's tomb or on Olivet's brow.

Oh, the outward hath gone! but in glory and power,
The spirit surviveth the things of an hour;
Unchanged, undecaying, its Pentecost flame
On the heart's secret altar is burning the same!

1837.

HYMNS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF LAMARTINE.

I.

'Encore un hymne, O ma lyre!
Un hymne pour le Seigneur,
Un hymne dans mon délire,
Un hymne dans mon bonheur.'

One hymn more, O my lyre!
Praise to the God above,
Of joy and life and love,
Sweeping its strings of fire!

Oh, who the speed of bird and wind
And sunbeam's glance will lend to me,
That, soaring upward, I may find
My resting-place and home in Thee?
Thou, whom my soul, midst doubt and gloom,
Adoreth with a fervent flame,—
Mysterious spirit! unto whom
Pertain nor sign nor name!

Swiftly my lyre's soft murmurs go
Up from the cold and joyless earth,
Back to the God who bade them flow,
Whose moving spirit sent them forth.
But as for me, O God! for me,
The lowly creature of Thy will,
Lingering and sad, I sigh to Thee,
An earth-bound pilgrim still!

Was not my spirit born to shine
Where yonder stars and suns are glowing?
To breathe with them the light divine
From God's own holy altar flowing?
To be, indeed, whate'er the soul
In dreams hath thirsted for so long,—
A portion of heaven's glorious whole
Of loveliness and song?

Oh, watchers of the stars at night,
Who breathe their fire, as we the air,—
Suns, thunders, stars, and rays of light,
Oh, say, is He, the Eternal, there?
Bend there around His awful throne
The seraph's glance, the angel's knee?
Or are thy inmost depths His own,
O wild and mighty sea?

Thoughts of my soul, how swift ye go!
Swift as the eagle's glance of fire,
Or arrows from the archer's bow,
To the far aim of your desire!
Thought after thought, ye thronging rise,
Like spring-doves from the startled wood,
Bearing like them your sacrifice
Of music unto God!

And shall these thoughts of joy and love
Come back again no more to me?
Returning like the patriarch's dove
Wing-weary from the eternal sea,
To bear within my longing arms
The promise-bough of kindlier skies,
Plucked from the green, immortal palms
Which shadow Paradise?

All-moving spirit! freely forth
At Thy command the strong wind goes:
Its errand to the passive earth,
Nor art can stay, nor strength oppose,
Until it folds its weary wing
Once more within the hand divine;
So, weary from its wandering,
My spirit turns to Thine!

Child of the sea, the mountain stream,
From its dark caverns, hurries on,
Ceaseless, by night and morning's beam,
By evening's star and noontide's sun,
Until at last it sinks to rest,
O'erwearied, in the waiting sea,
And moans upon its mother's breast,—
So turns my soul to Thee!

O Thou who bidst the torrent flow,
Who lendest wings unto the wind,—
Mover of all things! where art Thou?
Oh, whither shall I go to find
The secret of Thy resting-place?
Is there no holy wing for me,
That, soaring, I may search the space
Of highest heaven for Thee?

Oh, would I were as free to rise
As leaves on autumn's whirlwind borne,—
The arrowy light of sunset skies,
Or sound, or ray, or star of morn,
Which melts in heaven at twilight's close,
Or aught which soars unchecked and free
Through earth and heaven; that I might lose
Myself in finding Thee!

II.

LE CRI DE L'AME.

'Quand le souffle divin qui flotte sur le monde.'

When the breath divine is flowing,
Zephyr-like o'er all things going,
And, as the touch of viewless fingers,
Softly on my soul it lingers,

Open to a breath the lightest,
Conscious of a touch the slightest,—
As some calm, still lake, whereon
Sinks the snowy-bosomed swan,
And the glistening water-rings
Circle round her moving wings:
When my upward gaze is turning
Where the stars of heaven are burning
Through the deep and dark abyss,—
Flowers of midnight's wilderness,
Blowing with the evening's breath
Sweetly in their Maker's path:
When the breaking day is flushing
All the east, and light is gushing
Upward through the horizon's haze,
Sheaf-like, with its thousand rays,
Spreading, until all above
Overflows with joy and love,
And below, on earth's green bosom,
All is changed to light and blossom:

When my waking fancies over
Forms of brightness flit and hover
Holy as the seraphs are,
Who by Zion's fountains wear
On their foreheads, white and broad,
'Holiness unto the Lord!'
When, inspired with rapture high,
It would seem a single sigh
Could a world of love create;
That my life could know no date,
And my eager thoughts could fill
Heaven and Earth, o'erflowing still!

Then, O Father! Thou alone,
From the shadow of Thy throne,
To the sighing of my breast
And its rapture answerest.
All my thoughts, which, upward winging,
Bathe where Thy own light is springing,—
All my yearnings to be free
Are as echoes answering Thee!

Seldom upon lips of mine,
Father! rests that name of Thine;
Deep within my inmost breast,
In the secret place of mind,
Like an awful presence shrined,
Doth the dread idea rest!
Hushed and holy dwells it there,
Prompter of the silent prayer,
Lifting up my spirit's eye
And its faint, but earnest cry,
From its dark and cold abode,
Unto Thee, my Guide and God!

1837.

THE FAMILIST'S HYMN.

The Puritans of New England, even in their wilderness home, were not exempted from the sectarian contentions which agitated the mother country after the downfall of Charles the First, and of the established Episcopacy. The Quakers, Baptists, and Catholics were banished, on pain of death, from the Massachusetts Colony. One Samuel Gorton, a bold and eloquent declaimer, after preaching for a time in Boston against the doctrines of the Puritans, and declaring that their churches were mere human devices, and their sacrament and baptism an abomination, was driven out of the jurisdiction of the colony, and compelled to seek a residence among the savages. He gathered round him a considerable number of converts, who, like the primitive Christians, shared all things in common. His opinions, however, were so troublesome to the leading clergy of the colony, that they instigated an attack upon his 'Family' by an armed force, which seized upon the principal men in it, and brought them into Massachusetts, where they were sentenced to be kept at hard labor in several towns (one only in each town), during the pleasure of the General Court, they being forbidden, under severe penalties, to utter any of their religious sentiments, except to such ministers as might labor for their conversion. They were unquestionably sincere in their opinions, and, whatever may have been their errors, deserve to be ranked among those who have in all ages suffered for the freedom of conscience.

Father! to Thy suffering poor
Strength and grace and faith impart,
And with Thy own love restore
Comfort to the broken heart!
Oh, the failing ones confirm
With a holier strength of zeal!
Give Thou not the feeble worm
Helpless to the spoiler's heel!

Father! for Thy holy sake
We are spoiled and hunted thus;
Joyful, for Thy truth we take
Bonds and burthens unto us:

Poor, and weak, and robbed of all,
Weary with our daily task,
That Thy truth may never fall
Through our weakness, Lord, we ask.

Round our fired and wasted homes
Flits the forest-bird unscared,
And at noon the wild beast comes
Where our frugal meal was shared;
For the song of praises there
Shrieks the crow the livelong day;
For the sound of evening prayer
Howls the evil beast of prey.

Sweet the songs we loved to sing
Underneath Thy holy sky;
Words and tones that used to bring
Tears of joy in every eye;
Dear the wrestling hours of prayer,
When we gathered knee to knee,
Blameless youth and hoary hair,
Bowed, O God, alone to Thee.

As Thine early children, Lord,
Shared their wealth and daily bread,
Even so, with one accord,
We, in love, each other fed.
Not with us the miser's hoard,
Not with us his grasping hand;
Equal round a common board,
Drew our meek and brother band!

Safe our quiet Eden lay
When the war-whoop stirred the land
And the Indian turned away
From our home his bloody hand.
Well that forest-ranger saw,
That the burthen and the curse
Of the white man's cruel law
Rested also upon us.

Torn apart, and driven forth
To our toiling hard and long,
Father! from the dust of earth
Lift we still our grateful song!
Grateful, that in bonds we share
In Thy love which maketh free;
Joyful, that the wrongs we bear,
Draw us nearer, Lord, to Thee!

Grateful! that where'er we toil,—
By Wachuset's wooded side,
On Nantucket's sea-worn isle,
Or by wild Neponset's tide,—
Still, in spirit, we are near,
And our evening hymns, which rise
Separate and discordant here,
Meet and mingle in the skies!

Let the scoffer scorn and mock,
Let the proud and evil priest
Rob the needy of his flock,
For his wine-cup and his feast,—
Redden not Thy bolts in store
Through the blackness of Thy skies?
For the sighing of the poor
Wilt Thou not, at length, arise?

Worn and wasted, oh! how long
Shall Thy trodden poor complain?
In Thy name they bear the wrong,
In Thy cause the bonds of pain!
Melt oppression's heart of steel,
Let the haughty priesthood see,
And their blinded followers feel,
That in us they mock at Thee!

In Thy time, O Lord of hosts,
Stretch abroad that hand to save
Which of old, on Egypt's coasts,
Smote apart the Red Sea's wave!
Lead us from this evil land,
From the spoiler set us free,
And once more our gathered band,
Heart to heart, shall worship Thee!

1838.

EZEKIEL.

Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath

a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.—Ezekiel, xxxiii. 30–33.

They hear Thee not, O God! nor see;
Beneath Thy rod they mock at Thee;
The princes of our ancient line
Lie drunken with Assyrian wine;
The priests around Thy altar speak
The false words which their hearers seek;
And hymns which Chaldea's wanton maids
Have sung in Dura's idol-shades
Are with the Levites' chant ascending,
With Zion's holiest anthems blending!

On Israel's bleeding bosom set,
The heathen heel is crushing yet;
The towers upon our holy hill
Echo Chaldean footsteps still.
Our wasted shrines,—who weeps for them?
Who mourneth for Jerusalem?
Who turneth from his gains away?
Whose knee with mine is bowed to pray?
Who, leaving feast and purpling cup,
Takes Zion's lamentation up?

A sad and thoughtful youth, I went
With Israel's early banishment;
And where the sullen Chebar crept,
The ritual of my fathers kept.
The water for the trench I drew,
The firstling of the flock I slew,
And, standing at the altar's side,
I shared the Levites' lingering pride,
That still, amidst her mocking foes,
The smoke of Zion's offering rose.

In sudden whirlwind, cloud and flame,
The Spirit of the Highest came!
Before mine eyes a vision passed,
A glory terrible and vast;
With dreadful eyes of living things,
And sounding sweep of angel wings,
With circling light and sapphire throne,
And flame-like form of One thereon,
And voice of that dread Likeness sent
Down from the crystal firmament!

The burden of a prophet's power
Fell on me in that fearful hour;
From off unutterable woes
The curtain of the future rose;
I saw far down the coming time
The fiery chastisement of crime;
With noise of mingling hosts, and jar
Of falling towers and shouts of war,
I saw the nations rise and fall,
Like fire-gleams on my tent's white wall.

In dream and trance, I saw the slain
Of Egypt heaped like harvest grain.
I saw the walls of sea-born Tyre
Swept over by the spoiler's fire;
And heard the low, expiring moan
Of Edom on his rocky throne;
And, woe is me! the wild lament
From Zion's desolation sent;
And felt within my heart each blow
Which laid her holy places low.

In bonds and sorrow, day by day,
Before the pictured tile I lay;
And there, as in a mirror, saw
The coming of Assyria's war;
Her swarthy lines of spearmen pass
Like locusts through Bethhoron's grass;
I saw them draw their stormy hem
Of battle round Jerusalem;
And, listening, heard the Hebrew wail
Blend with the victor-trump of Baal!

Who trembled at my warning word?
Who owned the prophet of the Lord?
How mocked the rude, how scoffed the vile,
How stung the Levites' scornful smile,
As o'er my spirit, dark and slow,
The shadow crept of Israel's woe
As if the angel's mournful roll
Had left its record on my soul,
And traced in lines of darkness there
The picture of its great despair!

Yet ever at the hour I feel
My lips in prophecy unseal.
Prince, priest, and Levite gather near,
And Salem's daughters haste to hear,
On Chebar's waste and alien shore,
The harp of Judah swept once more.

They listen, as in Babel's throng
The Chaldeans to the dancer's song,
Or wild sabbeka's nightly play,
As careless and as vain as they.

And thus, O Prophet-bard of old,
Hast thou thy tale of sorrow told!
The same which earth's unwelcome seers
Have felt in all succeeding years.
Sport of the changeful multitude,
Nor calmly heard nor understood,
Their song has seemed a trick of art,
Their warnings but the actor's part.
With bonds, and scorn, and evil will,
The world requites its prophets still.

So was it when the Holy One
The garments of the flesh put on!
Men followed where the Highest led
For common gifts of daily bread,
And gross of ear, of vision dim,
Owned not the Godlike power of Him.
Vain as a dreamer's words to them
His wail above Jerusalem,
And meaningless the watch He kept
Through which His weak disciples slept.

Yet shrink not thou, whoe'er thou art,
For God's great purpose set apart,
Before whose far-discerning eyes,
The Future as the Present lies!
Beyond a narrow-bounded age
Stretches thy prophet-heritage,
Through Heaven's vast spaces angel-trod,
And through the eternal years of God!
Thy audience, worlds!—all things to be
The witness of the Truth in thee!

1844.

WHAT THE VOICE SAID.

MADDENED by Earth's wrong and evil,
'Lord!' I cried in sudden ire,
'From Thy right hand, clothed with thunder,
Shake the bolted fire!

'Love is lost, and Faith is dying;
With the brute the man is sold;
And the dropping blood of labor
Hardens into gold.

'Here the dying wail of Famine,
There the battle's groan of pain;
And, in silence, smooth-faced Mammon
Reaping men like grain.

'"Where is God, that we should fear Him?"
Thus the earth-born Titans say;
"God! if Thou art living, hear us!"
Thus the weak ones pray.'

'Thou, the patient Heaven upbraiding,'
Spake a solemn Voice within;
'Weary of our Lord's forbearance,
Art thou free from sin?

'Fearless brow to Him uplifting,
Canst thou for His thunders call,
Knowing that to guilt's attraction
Evermore they fall?

'Know'st thou not all germs of evil
In thy heart await their time?
Not thyself, but God's restraining,
Stays their growth of crime.

'Couldst thou boast, O child of weakness!
O'er the sons of wrong and strife,
Were their strong temptations planted
In thy path of life?

'Thou hast seen two streamlets gushing
From one fountain, clear and free,
But by widely varying channels
Searching for the sea.

'Glideth one through greenest valleys,
Kissing them with lips still sweet:
One, mad roaring down the mountains,
Stagnates at their feet.

'Is it choice whereby the Parsee
Kneels before his mother's fire?
In his black tent did the Tartar
Choose his wandering sire?

'He alone, whose hand is bounding
Human power and human will,
Looking through each soul's surrounding,
Knows its good or ill.

'For thyself, while wrong and sorrow
Make to thee their strong appeal,
Coward wert thou not to utter
What the heart must feel.

'Earnest words must needs be spoken
When the warm heart bleeds or burns
With its scorn of wrong, or pity
For the wronged, by turns.

'But, by all thy nature's weakness,
Hidden faults and follies known,
Be thou, in rebuking evil,
Conscious of thine own.

'Not the less shall stern-eyed Duty
To thy lips her trumpet set,
But with harsher blasts shall mingle
Wailings of regret.'

Cease not, Voice of holy speaking,
Teacher sent of God, be near,
Whispering through the day's cool silence,
Let my spirit hear!

So, when thoughts of evil-doers
Waken scorn, or hatred move,
Shall a mournful fellow-feeling
Temper all with love.

1847.

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

A FREE PARAPHRASE OF THE GERMAN.

To weary hearts, to mourning homes,
God's meekest Angel gently comes:
No power has he to banish pain,
Or give us back our lost again;
And yet in tenderest love, our dear
And Heavenly Father sends him here.

There's quiet in that Angel's glance,
There's rest in his still countenance!
He mocks no grief with idle cheer,
Nor wounds with words the mourner's ear;
But ills and woes he may not cure
He kindly trains us to endure.

Angel of Patience! sent to calm
Our feverish brows with cooling palm;
To lay the storms of hope and fear,
And reconcile life's smile and tear;
The throbs of wounded pride to still,
And make our own our Father's will!

O thou who mournest on thy way,
With longings for the close of day;
He walks with thee, that Angel kind,
And gently whispers, 'Be resigned:
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell
The dear Lord ordereth all things well!'

1847.

THE WIFE OF MANOAH TO HER HUSBAND.

AGAINST the sunset's glowing wall
The city towers rise black and tall,
Where Zorah, on its rocky height,
Stands like an armed man in the light.

Down Eshtaol's vales of ripened grain
Falls like a cloud the night amain,
And up the hillsides climbing slow
The barley reapers homeward go.

Look, dearest! how our fair child's head
The sunset light hath hallowëd,
Where at this olive's foot he lies,
Uplooking to the tranquil skies.

Oh, while beneath the fervent heat
Thy sickle swept the bearded wheat,
I 've watched, with mingled joy and dread,
Our child upon his grassy bed.

Joy, which the mother feels alone
Whose morning hope like mine had flown,
When to her bosom, over-blessed,
A dearer life than hers is pressed.

Dread, for the future dark and still,
Which shapes our dear one to its will;
Forever in his large calm eyes,
I read a tale of sacrifice.

The same foreboding awe I felt
When at the altar's side we knelt,
And he, who as a pilgrim came,
Rose, winged and glorious, through the flame.

I slept not, though the wild bees made
A dreamlike murmuring in the shade,
And on me the warm-fingered hours
Pressed with the drowsy smell of flowers.

Before me, in a vision, rose
The hosts of Israel's scornful foes,—
Rank over rank, helm, shield, and spear,
Glittered in noon's hot atmosphere.

I heard their boast, and bitter word,
Their mockery of the Hebrew's Lord,
I saw their hands His ark assail,
Their feet profane His holy veil.

No angel down the blue space spoke,
No thunder from the still sky broke;
But in their midst, in power and awe,
Like God's waked wrath, our child I saw!

A child no more!—harsh-browed and strong,
He towered a giant in the throng,
And down his shoulders, broad and bare,
Swept the black terror of his hair.

He raised his arm—he smote amain;
As round the reaper falls the grain,
So the dark host around him fell,
So sank the foes of Israel!

Again I looked. In sunlight shone
The towers and domes of Askelon;
Priest, warrior, slave, a mighty crowd
Within her idol temple bowed.

Yet one knelt not; stark, gaunt, and blind,
His arms the massive pillars twined,—
An eyeless captive, strong with hate
He stood there like an evil Fate.

The red shrines smoked,—the trumpets pealed:
He stooped,—the giant columns reeled;
Reeled tower and fane, sank arch and wall,
And the thick dust-cloud closed o'er all!

Above the shriek, the crash, the groan
Of the fallen pride of Askelon,
I heard, sheer down the echoing sky,
A voice as of an angel cry,—

The voice of him, who at our side
Sat through the golden eventide;
Of him who, on thy altar's blaze,
Rose fire-winged, with his song of praise.

'Rejoice o'er Israel's broken chain,
Gray mother of the mighty slain!
Rejoice!' it cried, 'he vanquisheth!
The strong in life is strong in death!

'To him shall Zorah's daughters raise
Through coming years their hymns of praise,
And gray old men at evening tell
Of all he wrought for Israel.

'And they who sing and they who hear
Alike shall hold thy memory dear,
And pour their blessings on thy head,
O mother of the mighty dead!'

It ceased; and though a sound I heard
As if great wings the still air stirred,
I only saw the barley sheaves
And hills half hid by olive leaves.

I bowed my face, in awe and fear,
On the dear child who slumbered near;
'With me, as with my only son,
O God,' I said, 'Thy will be done!'

1847.

MY SOUL AND I.

STAND still, my soul, in the silent dark
I would question thee,
Alone in the shadow drear and stark
With God and me!

What, my soul, was thy errand here?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year?
'Nay, none of these!'

Speak, soul, aright in His holy sight
Whose eye looks still
And steadily on thee through the night:
'To do His will!'

What hast thou done, O soul of mine,
That thou tremblest so?
Hast thou wrought His task, and kept the line
He bade thee go?

What, silent all! art sad of cheer?
Art fearful now?
When God seemed far and men were near,
How brave wert thou!

Aha! thou tremblest!—well I see
Thou 'rt craven grown.
Is it so hard with God and me
To stand alone?

Summon thy sunshine bravery back,
O wretched sprite!
Let me hear thy voice through this deep and black
Abysmal night.

What hast thou wrought for Right and Truth,
For God and Man,
From the golden hours of bright-eyed youth
To life's mid span?

Ah, soul of mine, thy tones I hear,
But weak and low,
Like far sad murmurs on my ear
They come and go.

'I have wrestled stoutly with the Wrong,
And borne the Right
From beneath the footfall of the throng
To life and light.

'Wherever Freedom shivered a chain,
God speed, quoth I;
To Error amidst her shouting train
I gave the lie.'

Ah, soul of mine! ah, soul of mine!
Thy deeds are well:
Were they wrought for Truth's sake or for thine?
My soul, pray tell.

'Of all the work my hand hath wrought
Beneath the sky,
Save a place in kindly human thought,
No gain have I.'

Go to, go to! for thy very self
Thy deeds were done:
Thou for fame, the miser for pelf,
Your end is one!

And where art thou going, soul of mine?
Canst see the end?
And whither this troubled life of thine
Evermore doth tend?

What daunts thee now? what shakes thee so?
My sad soul, say.
'I see a cloud like a curtain low
Hang o'er my way.

'Whither I go I cannot tell:
That cloud hangs black,
High as the heaven and deep as hell
Across my track.

'I see its shadow coldly enwrap
The souls before.
Sadly they enter it, step by step,
To return no more.

'They shrink, they shudder, dear God! they kneel
To Thee in prayer.
They shut their eyes on the cloud, but feel
That it still is there.

'In vain they turn from the dread Before
To the Known and Gone;
For while gazing behind them evermore
Their feet glide on.

'Yet, at times, I see upon sweet pale faces
A light begin
To tremble, as if from holy places
And shrines within.

'And at times methinks their cold lips move
With hymn and prayer,
As if somewhat of awe, but more of love
And hope were there.

'I call on the souls who have left the light
To reveal their lot;
'I bend mine ear to that wall of night,
And they answer not.

'But I hear around me sighs of pain
And the cry of fear,
And a sound like the slow sad dropping of rain,
Each drop a tear!

'Ah, the cloud is dark, and day by day
I am moving thither:
I must pass beneath it on my way—
God pity me!—whither?'

Ah, soul of mine! so brave and wise
In the life-storm loud,
Fronting so calmly all human eyes
In the sunlit crowd!

Now standing apart with God and me
Thou art weakness all,
Gazing vainly after the things to be
Through Death's dread wall.

But never for this, never for this
Was thy being lent;
For the craven's fear is but selfishness,
Like his merriment.

Folly and Fear are sisters twain:
One closing her eyes,
The other peopling the dark inane
With spectral lies.

Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
Whate'er thou fearest;
Round Him in calmest music rolls
Whate'er thou hearest.

What to thee is shadow, to Him is day,
And the end He knoweth,
And not on a blind and aimless way
The spirit goeth.

Man sees no future,—a phantom show
Is alone before him;
Past Time is dead, and the grasses grow,
And flowers bloom o'er him.

Nothing before, nothing behind;
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.

The Present, the Present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing;
Like the patriarch's angel hold it fast
Till it gives its blessing.

Why fear the night? why shrink from Death,
That phantom wan?
There is nothing in heaven or earth beneath
Save God and man.

Peopling the shadows we turn from Him
And from one another;
All is spectral and vague and dim
Save God and our brother!

Like warp and woof all destinies
Are woven fast,
Linked in sympathy like the keys
Of an organ vast.

Pluck one thread, and the web ye mar;
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run.

O restless spirit! wherefore strain
Beyond thy sphere?
Heaven and hell, with their joy and pain,
Are now and here.

Back to thyself is measured well
All thou hast given;
Thy neighbor's wrong is thy present hell,
His bliss, thy heaven.

And in life, in death, in dark and light,
All are in God's care:
Sound the black abyss, pierce the deep of night,
And He is there!

All which is real now remaineth,
And fadeth never:
The hand which upholds it now sustaineth
The soul forever.

Leaning on Him, make with reverent meekness
His own thy will,
And with strength from Him shall thy utter weakness
Life's task fulfil;

And that cloud itself, which now before thee
Lies dark in view,
Shall with beams of light from the inner glory
Be stricken through.

And like meadow mist through autumn's dawn
Uprolling thin,
Its thickest folds when about thee drawn
Let sunlight in.

Then of what is to be, and of what is done,
Why queriest thou?
The past and the time to be are one,
And both are now!

1847.

WORSHIP.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.—James i. 27.

The Pagan's myths through marble lips are spoken,
And ghosts of old Beliefs still flit and moan
Round fane and altar overthrown and broken,
O'er tree-grown barrow and gray ring of stone.

Blind Faith had martyrs in those old high places,
The Syrian hill grove and the Druid's wood,
With mothers offering, to the Fiend's embraces,
Bone of their bone, and blood of their own blood.

Red altars, kindling through that night of error,
Smoked with warm blood beneath the cruel eye
Of lawless Power and sanguinary Terror,
Throned on the circle of a pitiless sky;

Beneath whose baleful shadow, overcasting
All heaven above, and blighting earth below,
The scourge grew red, the lip grew pale with fasting,
And man's oblation was his fear and woe!

Then through great temples swelled the dismal moaning
Of dirge-like music and sepulchral prayer;
Pale wizard priests, o'er occult symbols droning,
Swung their white censers in the burdened air:

As if the pomp of rituals, and the savor
Of gums and spices could the Unseen One please;
As if His ear could bend, with childish favor,
To the poor flattery of the organ keys!

Feet red from war-fields trod the church aisles holy,
With trembling reverence: and the oppressor there,
Kneeling before his priest, abased and lowly,
Crushed human hearts beneath his knee of prayer.

Not such the service the benignant Father
Requireth at His earthly children's hands:
Not the poor offering of vain rites, but rather
The simple duty man from man demands.

For Earth He asks it: the full joy of heaven
Knoweth no change of waning or increase;
The great heart of the Infinite beats even,
Untroubled flows the river of His peace.

He asks no taper lights, on high surrounding
The priestly altar and the saintly grave,
No dolorous chant nor organ music sounding,
Nor incense clouding up the twilight nave.

For he whom Jesus loved hath truly spoken:
The holier worship which he deigns to bless
Restores the lost, and binds the spirit broken,
And feeds the widow and the fatherless!

Types of our human weakness and our sorrow!
Who lives unhaunted by his loved ones dead?
Who, with vain longing, seeketh not to borrow
From stranger eyes the home lights which have fled?

O brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was 'doing good;'
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangor
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace!

1848.

THE HOLY LAND.

Paraphrased from the lines in Lamartine's *Adieu to Marseilles*, beginning

'Je n'ai pas navigué sur l'océan de sable.'

I HAVE not felt, o'er seas of sand,
The rocking of the desert bark;
Nor laved at Hebron's fount my hand,
By Hebron's palm-trees cool and dark;
Nor pitched my tent at even-fall,
On dust where Job of old has lain,
Nor dreamed beneath its canvas wall,
The dream of Jacob o'er again.

One vast world-page remains unread;
How shine the stars in Chaldea's sky,
How sounds the reverent pilgrim's tread,
How beats the heart with God so nigh!
How round gray arch and column lone
The spirit of the old time broods,
And sighs in all the winds that moan
Along the sandy solitudes!

In thy tall cedars, Lebanon,
I have not heard the nations' cries,
Nor seen thy eagles stooping down
Where buried Tyre in ruin lies.
The Christian's prayer I have not said
In Tadmor's temples of decay,
Nor startled, with my dreary tread,
The waste where Memnon's empire lay.

Nor have I, from thy hallowed tide,
O Jordan! heard the low lament,
Like that sad wail along thy side
Which Israel's mournful prophet sent!
Nor thrilled within that grotto lone
Where, deep in night, the Bard of Kings
Felt hands of fire direct his own,
And sweep for God the conscious strings.

I have not climbed to Olivet,
Nor laid me where my Saviour lay,
And left His trace of tears as yet
By angel eyes unwept away;
Nor watched, at midnight's solemn time,
The garden where His prayer and groan,
Wrung by His sorrow and our crime,
Rose to One listening ear alone.

I have not kissed the rock-hewn grot
Where in His mother's arms He lay,
Nor knelt upon the sacred spot
Where last His footsteps pressed the clay;

Nor looked on that sad mountain head,
Nor smote my sinful breast, where wide
His arms to fold the world He spread,
And bowed His head to bless—and died!

1848.

THE REWARD.

Who, looking backward from his manhood's prime,
Sees not the spectre of his misspent time?
And, through the shade
Of funeral cypress planted thick behind,
Hears no reproachful whisper on the wind
From his loved dead?

Who bears no trace of passion's evil force?
Who shuns thy sting, O terrible Remorse?
Who does not cast
On the thronged pages of his memory's book,
At times, a sad and half-reluctant look,
Regretful of the past?

Alas! the evil which we fain would shun
We do, and leave the wished-for good undone:
Our strength to-day
Is but to-morrow's weakness, prone to fall;
Poor, blind, unprofitable servants all
Are we alway.

Yet who, thus looking backward o'er his years,
Feels not his eyelids wet with grateful tears,
If he hath been
Permitted, weak and sinful as he was,
To cheer and aid, in some ennobling cause,
His fellow-men?

If he hath hidden the outcast, or let in
A ray of sunshine to the cell of sin;
If he hath lent
Strength to the weak, and, in an hour of need,
Over the suffering, mindless of his creed
Or home, hath bent;

He has not lived in vain, and while he gives
The praise to Him, in whom he moves and lives,
With thankful heart;
He gazes backward, and with hope before,
Knowing that from his works he nevermore
Can henceforth part.

1848.

THE WISH OF TO-DAY.

I ask not now for gold to gild
With mocking shine a weary frame;
The yearning of the mind is stilled,
I ask not now for Fame.

A rose-cloud, dimly seen above,
Melting in heaven's blue depths away;
Oh, sweet, fond dream of human Love!
For thee I may not pray.

But, bowed in lowliness of mind,
I make my humble wishes known;
I only ask a will resigned,
O Father, to Thine own!

To-day, beneath Thy chastening eye
I crave alone for peace and rest,
Submissive in Thy hand to lie,
And feel that it is best.

A marvel seems the Universe,
A miracle our Life and Death;
A mystery which I cannot pierce,
Around, above, beneath.

In vain I task my aching brain,
In vain the sage's thought I scan,
I only feel how weak and vain,
How poor and blind, is man.

And now my spirit sighs for home,
And longs for light whereby to see,
And, like a weary child, would come,
O Father, unto Thee!

Though oft, like letters traced on sand,
My weak resolves have passed away,
In mercy lend Thy helping hand
Unto my prayer to-day!

1848.

ALL 'S WELL.

THE clouds, which rise with thunder, slake
Our thirsty souls with rain;
The blow most dreaded falls to break
From off our limbs a chain;
And wrongs of man to man but make
The love of God more plain.
As through the shadowy lens of even
The eye looks farthest into heaven
On gleams of star and depths of blue
The glaring sunshine never knew!

1850.

INVOCATION.

THROUGH Thy clear spaces, Lord, of old,
Formless and void the dead earth rolled;
Deaf to Thy heaven's sweet music, blind
To the great lights which o'er it shined;
No sound, no ray, no warmth, no breath,—
A dumb despair, a wandering death.

Then that dark, weltering horror came
Thy spirit, like a subtle flame,—
A breath of life electrical,
Awakening and transforming all,
Till beat and thrilled in every part
The pulses of a living heart.

Then knew their bounds the land and sea;
Then smiled the bloom of mead and tree;
From flower to moth, from beast to man,
The quick creative impulse ran;
And earth, with life from Thee renewed,
Was in Thy holy eyesight good.

As lost and void, as dark and cold
And formless as that earth of old;
A wandering waste of storm and night,
Midst spheres of song and realms of light;
A blot upon Thy holy sky,
Untouched, unwarned of Thee, am I.

O Thou who movest on the deep
Of spirits, wake my own from sleep!
Its darkness melt, its coldness warm,
The lost restore, the ill transform,
That flower and fruit henceforth may be
Its grateful offering, worthy Thee.

1851.

QUESTIONS OF LIFE.

And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer,

And said, Thy heart hath gone too far in this world, and thinkest thou to comprehend the way of the Most High?

Then said I, Yea, my Lord. . . .

Then said he unto me, Go thy way, weigh me the weight of the fire or measure me the blast of the wind, or call me again the hour that is past.

2 ESDRAS, ch. iv.

A BENDING staff I would not break,
A feeble faith I would not shake,
Nor even rashly pluck away
The error which some truth may stay,
Whose loss might leave the soul without
A shield against the shafts of doubt.

And yet, at times, when over all
A darker mystery seems to fall,
(May God forgive the child of dust,
Who seeks to know, where Faith should trust!)
I raise the questions, old and dark,
Of Uzdom's tempted patriarch,
And, speech-confounded, build again
The baffled tower of Shinar's plain.

I am: how little more I know!
Whence came I? Whither do I go?
A centred self, which feels and is;
A cry between the silences;
A shadow-birth of clouds at strife
With sunshine on the hills of life;
A shaft from Nature's quiver cast
Into the Future from the Past;
Between the cradle and the shroud,
A meteor's flight from cloud to cloud.

Thorough the vastness, arching all,
I see the great stars rise and fall,
The rounding seasons come and go,
The tided oceans ebb and flow;
The tokens of a central force,
Whose circles, in their widening course,
O'erlap and move the universe;
The workings of the law whence springs
The rhythmic harmony of things,
Which shapes in earth the darkling spar,
And orbs in heaven the morning star.

Of all I see, in earth and sky,—
Star, flower, beast, bird,—what part have I?
This conscious life,—is it the same
Which thrills the universal frame,
Whereby the caverned crystal shoots,
And mounts the sap from forest roots,
Whereby the exiled wood-bird tells
When Spring makes green her native dells?
How feels the stone the pang of birth,
Which brings its sparkling prism forth?
The forest-tree the throb which gives
The life-blood to its new-born leaves?
Do bird and blossom feel, like me,
Life's many-folded mystery,—
The wonder which it is to be?
Or stand I severed and distinct,
From Nature's chain of life unlinked?
Allied to all, yet not the less
Prisoned in separate consciousness,
Alone o'erburdened with a sense
Of life, and cause, and consequence?

In vain to me the Sphinx propounds
The riddle of her sights and sounds;
Back still the vaulted mystery gives
The echoed question it receives.
What sings the brook? What oracle
Is in the pine-tree's organ swell?
What may the wind's low burden be?
The meaning of the moaning sea?
The hieroglyphics of the stars?
Or clouded sunset's crimson bars?
I vainly ask, for mocks my skill
The trick of Nature's cipher still.

I turn from Nature unto men,
I ask the stylus and the pen;
What sang the bards of old? What meant
The prophets of the Orient?
The rolls of buried Egypt, hid
In painted tomb and pyramid?
What mean Idúmea's arrowy lines,
Or dusk Elora's monstrous signs?
How speaks the primal thought of man
From the grim carvings of Copan?
Where rests the secret? Where the keys
Of the old death-bolted mysteries?
Alas! the dead retain their trust;
Dust hath no answer from the dust.

The great enigma still unguessed,
Unanswered the eternal quest;
I gather up the scattered rays
Of wisdom in the early days,
Faint gleams and broken, like the light
Of meteors in a northern night,
Betraying to the darkling earth
The unseen sun which gave them birth;
I listen to the sibyl's chant,
The voice of priest and hierophant;
I know what Indian Kreeshna saith,
And what of life and what of death
The demon taught to Socrates;
And what, beneath his garden-trees
Slow pacing, with a dream-like tread,
The solemn-thoughted Plato said;
Nor lack I tokens, great or small,
Of God's clear light in each and all,
While holding with more dear regard
The scroll of Hebrew seer and bard,
The starry pages promise-lit
With Christ's Evangel over-writ,
Thy miracle of life and death,
O Holy One of Nazareth!

On Aztec ruins, gray and lone,
The circling serpent coils in stone,—
Type of the endless and unknown;
Whereof we seek the clue to find,
With groping fingers of the blind!
Forever sought, and never found,
We trace that serpent-symbol round
Our resting-place, our starting bound!
Oh, thriftlessness of dream and guess!
Oh, wisdom which is foolishness!
Why idly seek from outward things
The answer inward silence brings?
Why stretch beyond our proper sphere
And age, for that which lies so near?
Why climb the far-off hills with pain,
A nearer view of heaven to gain?
In lowliest depths of bosky dells
The hermit Contemplation dwells.
A fountain's pine-hung slope his seat,
And lotus-twined his silent feet,
Whence, piercing heaven, with screenëd sight,
He sees at noon the stars, whose light
Shall glorify the coming night.

Here let me pause, my quest forego;

Enough for me to feel and know
That He in whom the cause and end,
The past and future, meet and blend,—
Who, girt with His Immensities,
Our vast and star-hung system sees,
Small as the clustered Pleiades,—
Moves not alone the heavenly quires,
But waves the spring-time's grassy spires,
Guards not archangel feet alone,
But deigns to guide and keep my own;
Speaks not alone the words of fate
Which worlds destroy, and worlds create,
But whispers in my spirit's ear,
In tones of love, or warning fear,
A language none beside may hear.

To Him, from wanderings long and wild,
I come, an over-wearied child,
In cool and shade His peace to find,
Like dew-fall settling on my mind.
Assured that all I know is best,
And humbly trusting for the rest,
I turn from Fancy's cloud-built scheme,
Dark creed, and mournful eastern dream
Of power, impersonal and cold,
Controlling all, itself controlled,
Maker and slave of iron laws,
Alike the subject and the cause;
From vain philosophies, that try
The sevenfold gates of mystery,
And, baffled ever, babble still,
Word-prodigal of fate and will;
From Nature, and her mockery, Art,
And book and speech of men apart,
To the still witness in my heart;
With reverence waiting to behold
His Avatár of love untold,
The Eternal Beauty new and old!

1852.

FIRST-DAY THOUGHTS.

In calm and cool and silence, once again
I find my old accustomed place among
My brethren, where, perchance, no human tongue
Shall utter words; where never hymn is sung,
Nor deep-toned organ blown, nor censer swung,
Nor dim light falling through the pictured pane!
There, syllabled by silence, let me hear
The still small voice which reached the prophet's ear;
Read in my heart a still diviner law
Than Israel's leader on his tables saw!
There let me strive with each besetting sin,
Recall my wandering fancies, and restrain
The sore disquiet of a restless brain;
And, as the path of duty is made plain,
May grace be given that I may walk therein,
Not like the hireling, for his selfish gain,
With backward glances and reluctant tread,
Making a merit of his coward dread,
But, cheerful, in the light around me thrown,
Walking as one to pleasant service led;
Doing God's will as if it were my own,
Yet trusting not in mine, but in His strength alone!

1852.

TRUST.

The same old baffling questions! O my friend,
I cannot answer them. In vain I send
My soul into the dark, where never burn
The lamps of science, nor the natural light
Of Reason's sun and stars! I cannot learn
Their great and solemn meanings, nor discern
The awful secrets of the eyes which turn
Evermore on us through the day and night
With silent challenge and a dumb demand,
Proffering the riddles of the dread unknown,
Like the calm Sphinxes, with their eyes of stone,
Questioning the centuries from their veils of sand!

I have no answer for myself or thee,
Save that I learned beside my mother's knee;
'All is of God that is, and is to be;
And God is good.' Let this suffice us still,
Resting in childlike trust upon His will
Who moves to His great ends unthwarted by the ill.

1853.

TRINITAS.

At morn I prayed, 'I fain would see
How Three are One, and One is Three;
Read the dark riddle unto me.'

I wandered forth, the sun and air
I saw bestowed with equal care
On good and evil, foul and fair.

No partial favor dropped the rain;
Alike the righteous and profane
Rejoiced above their heading grain.

And my heart murmured, 'Is it meet
That blindfold Nature thus should treat
With equal hand the tares and wheat?'

A presence melted through my mood,—
A warmth, a light, a sense of good,
Like sunshine through a winter wood.

I saw that presence, mailed complete
In her white innocence, pause to greet
A fallen sister of the street.

Upon her bosom snowy pure
The lost one clung, as if secure
From inward guilt or outward lure.

'Beware!' I said; 'in this I see
No gain to her, but loss to thee:
Who touches pitch defiled must be.'

I passed the haunts of shame and sin,
And a voice whispered, 'Who therein
Shall these lost souls to Heaven's peace win?

'Who there shall hope and health dispense,
And lift the ladder up from thence
Whose rounds are prayers of penitence?'

I said, 'No higher life they know;
These earth-worms love to have it so.
Who stoops to raise them sinks as low.'

That night with painful care I read
What Hippo's saint and Calvin said;
The living seeking to the dead!

In vain I turned, in weary quest,
Old pages, where (God give them rest!)
The poor creed-mongers dreamed and guessed.

And still I prayed, 'Lord, let me see
How Three are One, and One is Three;
Read the dark riddle unto me!'

Then something whispered, 'Dost thou pray
For what thou hast? This very day
The Holy Three have crossed thy way.

'Did not the gifts of sun and air
To good and ill alike declare
The all-compassionate Father's care?

'In the white soul that stooped to raise
The lost one from her evil ways,
Thou saw'st the Christ, whom angels praise!

'A bodiless Divinity,
The still small Voice that spake to thee
Was the Holy Spirit's mystery!

'O blind of sight, of faith how small!
Father, and Son, and Holy Call;
This day thou hast denied them all!

'Revealed in love and sacrifice,
The Holiest passed before thine eyes,
One and the same, in threefold guise.

'The equal Father in rain and sun,
His Christ in the good to evil done,
His Voice in thy soul;—and the Three are One!'

I shut my grave Aquinas fast;
The monkish gloss of ages past,
The schoolman's creed aside I cast.

And my heart answered, 'Lord, I see
How Three are One, and One is Three;
Thy riddle hath been read to me!'

1858.

THE SISTERS.

A PICTURE BY BARRY.

THE shade for me, but over thee
The lingering sunshine still;
As, smiling, to the silent stream
Comes down the singing rill.

So come to me, my little one,—
My years with thee I share,
And mingle with a sister's love
A mother's tender care.

But keep the smile upon thy lip,
The trust upon thy brow;
Since for the dear one God hath called
We have an angel now.

Our mother from the fields of heaven
Shall still her ear incline;
Nor need we fear her human love
Is less for love divine.

The songs are sweet they sing beneath
The trees of life so fair,
But sweetest of the songs of heaven
Shall be her children's prayer.

Then, darling, rest upon my breast,
And teach my heart to lean
With thy sweet trust upon the arm
Which folds us both unseen!

1858.

'THE ROCK' IN EL GHOR.

DEAD Petra in her hill-tomb sleeps,
Her stones of emptiness remain;
Around her sculptured mystery sweeps
The lonely waste of Edom's plain.

From the doomed dwellers in the cleft
The bow of vengeance turns not back;
Of all her myriads none are left
Along the Wady Mousa's track.

Clear in the hot Arabian day
Her arches spring, her statues climb;
Unchanged, the graven wonders pay
No tribute to the spoiler, Time!

Unchanged the awful lithograph
Of power and glory undertrod;
Of nations scattered like the chaff
Blown from the threshing-floor of God.

Yet shall the thoughtful stranger turn
From Petra's gates with deeper awe,
To mark afar the burial urn
Of Aaron on the cliffs of Hor;

And where upon its ancient guard
Thy Rock, El Ghor, is standing yet,—
Looks from its turrets desertward,
And keeps the watch that God has set.

The same as when in thunders loud
It heard the voice of God to man,
As when it saw in fire and cloud
The angels walk in Israel's van!

Or when from Ezion-Geber's way
It saw the long procession file,
And heard the Hebrew timbrels play
The music of the lordly Nile;

Or saw the tabernacle pause,
Cloud-bound, by Kadesh Barnea's wells,
While Moses graved the sacred laws,
And Aaron swung his golden bells.

Rock of the desert, prophet-sung!
How grew its shadowing pile at length,
A symbol, in the Hebrew tongue,
Of God's eternal love and strength.

On lip of bard and scroll of seer,
From age to age went down the name,
Until the Shiloh's promised year,
And Christ, the Rock of Ages, came!

The path of life we walk to-day
Is strange as that the Hebrews trod;
We need the shadowing rock, as they,—
We need, like them, the guides of God.

God send His angels, Cloud and Fire,
To lead us o'er the desert sand!
God give our hearts their long desire,
His shadow in a weary land!

1859.

THE OVER-HEART.

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever!
ROMANS, xi. 36.

ABOVE, below, in sky and sod,
In leaf and spar, in star and man,
Well might the wise Athenian scan
The geometric signs of God,
The measured order of His plan.

And India's mystics sang aright
Of the One Life pervading all,—
One Being's tidal rise and fall
In soul and form, in sound and sight,—
Eternal outflow and recall.

God is: and man in guilt and fear
The central fact of Nature owns;
Kneels, trembling, by his altar-stones,
And darkly dreams the ghastly smear
Of blood appeases and atones.

Guilt shapes the Terror: deep within
The human heart the secret lies
Of all the hideous deities;
And, painted on a ground of sin,
The fabled gods of torment rise!

And what is He? The ripe grain nods,
The sweet dews fall, the sweet flowers blow;
But darker signs His presence show:
The earthquake and the storm are God's,
And good and evil interflow.

O hearts of love! O souls that turn
Like sunflowers to the pure and best!
To you the truth is manifest:
For they the mind of Christ discern
Who lean like John upon His breast!

In him of whom the sibyl told,
For whom the prophet's harp was toned,
Whose need the sage and magian owned,
The loving heart of God behold,
The hope for which the ages groaned!

Fade, pomp of dreadful imagery
Wherewith mankind have deified
Their hate, and selfishness, and pride!
Let the scared dreamer wake to see
The Christ of Nazareth at his side!

What doth that holy Guide require?
No rite of pain, nor gift of blood,
But man a kindly brotherhood,
Looking, where duty is desire,
To Him, the beautiful and good.

Gone be the faithlessness of fear,
And let the pitying heaven's sweet rain
Wash out the altar's bloody stain;
The law of Hatred disappear,
The law of Love alone remain.

How fall the idols false and grim!
And lo! their hideous wreck above
The emblems of the Lamb and Dove!
Man turns from God, not God from him;
And guilt, in suffering, whispers Love!

The world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled;
It yet shall touch His garment's fold,
And feel the heavenly Alchemist
Transform its very dust to gold.

The theme befitting angel tongues
Beyond a mortal's scope has grown.
O heart of mine! with reverence own
The fulness which to it belongs,
And trust the unknown for the known.

1859.

THE SHADOW AND THE LIGHT.

'And I sought, whence is Evil: I set before the eye of my spirit the whole creation; whatsoever we see therein,—sea, earth, air, stars, trees, moral creatures,—yea, whatsoever there is we do not see,—angels and spiritual powers. Where is evil, and whence comes it, since God the Good hath created all things? Why made He anything at all of evil, and not rather by His Almightiness cause it not to be? These thoughts I turned in my miserable heart, overcharged with most gnawing cares.' 'And, admonished to return to myself, I entered even into my inmost soul, Thou being my guide, and beheld even beyond my soul and mind the Light unchangeable. He

who knows the Truth knows what that Light is, and he that knows it knows Eternity! O Truth, who art Eternity! Love, who art Truth! Eternity, who art Love! And I beheld that Thou madest all things good, and to Thee is nothing whatsoever evil. From the angel to the worm, from the first motion to the last, Thou settest each in its place, and everything is good in its kind. Woe is me!—how high art Thou in the highest, how deep in the deepest! and Thou never departest from us, and we scarcely return to Thee.'—AUGUSTINE'S *Soliloquies*, Book VII.

THE fourteen centuries fall away
Between us and the Afric saint,
And at his side we urge, to-day,
The immemorial quest and old complaint.

No outward sign to us is given,—
From sea or earth comes no reply;
Hushed as the warm Numidian heaven
He vainly questioned bends our frozen sky.

No victory comes of all our strife,—
From all we grasp the meaning slips;
The Sphinx sits at the gate of life,
With the old question on her awful lips.

In paths unknown we hear the feet
Of fear before, and guilt behind;
We pluck the wayside fruit, and eat
Ashes and dust beneath its golden rind.

From age to age descends unchecked
The sad bequest of sire to son,
The body's taint, the mind's defect;
Through every web of life the dark threads run.

Oh, why and whither? God knows all;
I only know that He is good,
And that whatever may befall
Or here or there, must be the best that could.

Between the dreadful cherubim
A Father's face I still discern,
As Moses looked of old on Him,
And saw His glory into goodness turn!

For He is merciful as just;
And so, by faith correcting sight,
I bow before His will, and trust
Howe'er they seem He doeth all things right.

And dare to hope that He will make
The rugged smooth, the doubtful plain;
His mercy never quite forsake;
His healing visit every realm of pain;

That suffering is not His revenge
Upon His creatures weak and frail,
Sent on a pathway new and strange
With feet that wander and with eyes that fail;

That, o'er the crucible of pain,
Watches the tender eye of Love
The slow transmuting of the chain
Whose links are iron below to gold above!

Ah me! we doubt the shining skies,
Seen through our shadows of offence,
And drown with our poor childish cries
The cradle-hymn of kindly Providence.

And still we love the evil cause,
And of the just effect complain:
'We tread upon life's broken laws,
And murmur at our self-inflicted pain;

We turn us from the light, and find
Our spectral shapes before us thrown,
As they who leave the sun behind
Walk in the shadows of themselves alone.

And scarce by will or strength of ours
We set our faces to the day;
Weak, wavering, blind, the Eternal Powers
Alone can turn us from ourselves away.

Our weakness is the strength of sin,
But love must needs be stronger far,
Outreaching all and gathering in
The erring spirit and the wandering star.

A Voice grows with the growing years;
Earth, hushing down her bitter cry,
Looks upward from her graves, and hears,
'The Resurrection and the Life am I.'

O Love Divine!—whose constant beam
Shines on the eyes that will not see,
And waits to bless us, while we dream
Thou leavest us because we turn from thee!

All souls that struggle and aspire,
All hearts of prayer by thee are lit;
And, dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and twilight centuries sit.

Nor bounds, nor clime, nor creed thou know'st,
Wide as our need thy favors fall;
The white wings of the Holy Ghost
Stoop, seen or unseen, o'er the heads of all.

O Beauty, old yet ever new![74]
Eternal Voice, and Inward Word,
The Logos of the Greek and Jew,
The old sphere-music which the Samian heard!

Truth which the sage and prophet saw,
Long sought without, but found within,
The Law of Love beyond all law,
The Life o'erflooding mortal death and sin!

Shine on us with the light which glowed
Upon the trance-bound shepherd's way,
Who saw the Darkness overflowed
And drowned by tides of everlasting Day.[75]

Shine, light of God!—make broad thy scope
To all who sin and suffer; more
And better than we dare to hope
With Heaven's compassion make our longings poor!

1860.

THE CRY OF A LOST SOUL.

Lieutenant Herndon's *Report of the Exploration of the Amazon* has a striking description of the peculiar and melancholy notes of a bird heard by night on the shores of the river. The Indian guides called it 'The Cry of a Lost Soul'! Among the numerous translations of this poem is one by the Emperor of Brazil.[76]

In that black forest, where, when day is done,
With a snake's stillness glides the Amazon
Darkly from sunset to the rising sun,

A cry, as of the pained heart of the wood,
The long, despairing moan of solitude
And darkness and the absence of all good,

Startles the traveller, with a sound so drear,
So full of hopeless agony and fear,
His heart stands still and listens like his ear.

The guide, as if he heard a dead-bell toll,
Starts, drops his oar against the gunwale's thole,
Crosses himself, and whispers, 'A lost soul!'

'No, Señor, not a bird. I know it well,—
It is the pained soul of some infidel
Or cursëd heretic that cries from hell.

'Poor fool! with hope still mocking his despair,
He wanders, shrieking on the midnight air
For human pity and for Christian prayer.

'Saints strike him dumb! Our Holy Mother hath
No prayer for him who, sinning unto death,
Burns always in the furnace of God's wrath!'

Thus to the baptized pagan's cruel lie,
Lending new horror to that mournful cry,
The voyager listens, making no reply.

Dim burns the boat-lamp; shadows deepen round,
From giant trees with snake-like creepers wound,
And the black water glides without a sound.

But in the traveller's heart a secret sense
Of nature plastic to benign intents,
And an eternal good in Providence,

Lifts to the starry calm of heaven his eyes;
And lo! rebuking all earth's ominous cries,
The Cross of pardon lights the tropic skies!

'Father of all!' he urges his strong plea,
'Thou lovest all: Thy erring child may be
Lost to himself, but never lost to Thee!

'All souls are Thine; the wings of morning bear
None from that Presence which is everywhere,
Nor hell itself can hide, for Thou art there.

'Through sins of sense, perversities of will,
Through doubt and pain, through guilt and shame and ill,
Thy pitying eye is on Thy creature still.

'Wilt Thou not make, Eternal Source and Goal!
In Thy long years, life's broken circle whole,
And change to praise the cry of a lost soul?'

1862.

ANDREW RYKMAN'S PRAYER.

Andrew Rykman's dead and gone;
You can see his leaning slate
In the graveyard, and thereon
Read his name and date.

'*Trust is truer than our fears,*'
Runs the legend through the moss,
'*Gain is not in added years,*
Nor in death is loss.'

Still the feet that thither trod,
All the friendly eyes are dim:
Only Nature, now, and God
Have a care for him.

There the dews of quiet fall,
Singing birds and soft winds stray:
Shall the tender Heart of all
Be less kind than they?

What he was and what he is
They who ask may haply find,
If they read this prayer of his
Which he left behind.

Pardon, Lord, the lips that dare
Shape in words a mortal's prayer!
Prayer, that, when my day is done,
And I see its setting sun,
Shorn and beamless, cold and dim,
Sink beneath the horizon's rim,—
When this ball of rock and clay
Crumbles from my feet away,
And the solid shores of sense
Melt into the vague immense,
Father! I may come to Thee
Even with the beggar's plea,
As the poorest of Thy poor,
With my needs, and nothing more.

Not as one who seeks his home
With a step assured I come;
Still behind the tread I hear
Of my life-companion, Fear;
Still a shadow deep and vast
From my westering feet is cast,
Wavering, doubtful, undefined,
Never shapen nor outlined:
From myself the fear has grown,
And the shadow is my own.
Yet, O Lord, through all a sense
Of Thy tender providence
Stays my failing heart on Thee,
And confirms the feeble knee;
And, at times, my worn feet press
Spaces of cool quietness,
Lilied whiteness shone upon
Not by light of moon or sun.
Hours there be of inmost calm,
Broken but by grateful psalm,
When I love Thee more than fear Thee,
And Thy blessed Christ seems near me,
With forgiving look, as when
He beheld the Magdalen.
Well I know that all things move
To the spheral rhythm of love,—
That to Thee, O Lord of all!
Nothing can of chance befall:
Child and seraph, mote and star,
Well Thou knowest what we are!
Through Thy vast creative plan

Looking, from the worm to man,
There is pity in Thine eyes,
But no hatred nor surprise.
Not in blind caprice of will,
Not in cunning sleight of skill,
Not for show of power, was wrought
Nature's marvel in Thy thought.
Never careless hand and vain
Smites these chords of joy and pain;
No immortal selfishness
Plays the game of curse and bless:
Heaven and earth are witnesses
That Thy glory goodness is.
Not for sport of mind and force
Hast Thou made Thy universe,
But as atmosphere and zone
Of Thy loving heart alone.
Man, who walketh in a show,
Sees before him, to and fro,
Shadow and illusion go;
All things flow and fluctuate,
Now contract and now dilate.
In the welter of this sea,
Nothing stable is but Thee;
In this whirl of swooning trance,
Thou alone art permanence;
All without Thee only seems,
All beside is choice of dreams.
Never yet in darkest mood
Doubted I that Thou wast good,
Nor mistook my will for fate,
Pain of sin for heavenly hate,—
Never dreamed the gates of pearl
Rise from out the burning marl,
Or that good can only live
Of the bad conservative,
And through counterpoise of hell
Heaven alone be possible.

For myself alone I doubt;
All is well, I know, without;
I alone the beauty mar,
I alone the music jar.
Yet, with hands by evil stained,
And an ear by discord pained,
I am groping for the keys
Of the heavenly harmonies;
Still within my heart I bear
Love for all things good and fair.
Hands of want or souls in pain
Have not sought my door in vain;
I have kept my fealty good
To the human brotherhood;
Scarcely have I asked in prayer
That which others might not share.
I, who hear with secret shame
Praise that paineth more than blame,
Rich alone in favors lent,
Virtuous by accident,
Doubtful where I fain would rest,
Frailest where I seem the best,
Only strong for lack of test,—
What am I, that I should press
Special pleas of selfishness,
Coolly mounting into heaven
On my neighbor unforgiven?
Ne'er to me, howe'er disguised,
Comes a saint unrecognized;
Never fails my heart to greet
Noble deed with warmer beat;
Halt and maimed, I own not less
All the grace of holiness;
Nor, through shame or self-distrust,
Less I love the pure and just.
Lord, forgive these words of mine:
What have I that is not Thine?
Whatsoe'er I fain would boast
Needs Thy pitying pardon most.
Thou, O Elder Brother! who
In Thy flesh our trial knew,
Thou, who hast been touched by these
Our most sad infirmities,
Thou alone the gulf canst span
In the dual heart of man,
And between the soul and sense
Reconcile all difference,
Change the dream of me and mine
For the truth of Thee and Thine,
And, through chaos, doubt, and strife,
Interfuse Thy calm of life.
Haply, thus by Thee renewed,
In Thy borrowed goodness good,
Some sweet morning yet in God's
Dim, æonian periods,
Joyful I shall wake to see
Those I love who rest in Thee,
And to them in Thee allied
Shall my soul be satisfied.

Scarcely Hope hath shaped for me
What the future life may be.

Other lips may well be bold;
Like the publican of old,
I can only urge the plea,
'Lord, be merciful to me!'
Nothing of desert I claim,
Unto me belongeth shame.
Not for me the crowns of gold,
Palms, and harpings manifold;
Not for erring eye and feet
Jasper wall and golden street.
What Thou wilt, O Father, give!
All is gain that I receive.
If my voice I may not raise
In the elders' song of praise,
If I may not, sin-defiled,
Claim my birthright as a child,
Suffer it that I to Thee
As an hired servant be;
Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful, so the work be Thine;
Let me find the humblest place
In the shadow of Thy grace:
Blest to me were any spot
Where temptation whispers not.
If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do;
Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant;
Let me find in Thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy;
Out of self to love be led
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude.

So we read the prayer of him
Who, with John of Labadie,
Trod, of old, the oozy rim
Of the Zuyder Zee.

Thus did Andrew Rykman pray.
Are we wiser, better grown,
That we may not, in our day,
Make his prayer our own?

1863.

THE ANSWER.

SPARE me, dread angel of reproof,
And let the sunshine weave to-day
Its gold-threads in the warp and woof
Of life so poor and gray.

Spare me awhile; the flesh is weak.
These lingering feet, that fain would stray
Among the flowers, shall some day seek
The strait and narrow way.

Take off thy ever-watchful eye,
The awe of thy rebuking frown;
The dullest slave at times must sigh
To fling his burdens down;

To drop his galley's straining oar,
And press, in summer warmth and calm,
The lap of some enchanted shore
Of blossom and of balm.

Grudge not my life its hour of bloom,
My heart its taste of long desire;
This day be mine: be those to come
As duty shall require.

The deep voice answered to my own,
Smiting my selfish prayers away;
'To-morrow is with God alone,
And man hath but to-day.

'Say not, thy fond, vain heart within,
The Father's arm shall still be wide,
When from these pleasant ways of sin
Thou turn'st at eventide.

'"Cast thyself down," the tempter saith,
"And angels shall thy feet upbear."
He bids thee make a lie of faith,
And blasphemy of prayer.

'Though God be good and free be heaven,
No force divine can love compel;
And, though the song of sins forgiven
May sound through lowest hell,

'The sweet persuasion of His voice
Respects thy sanctity of will.
He giveth day: thou hast thy choice
To walk in darkness still;

'As one who, turning from the light,
Watches his own gray shadow fall,
Doubting, upon his path of night,
If there be day at all!

'No word of doom may shut thee out,
No wind of wrath may downward whirl,
No swords of fire keep watch about
The open gates of pearl;

'A tenderer light than moon or sun,
Than song of earth a sweeter hymn,
May shine and sound forever on,
And thou be deaf and dim.

'Forever round the Mercy-seat
The guiding lights of Love shall burn;
But what if, habit-bound, thy feet
Shall lack the will to turn?

'What if thine eye refuse to see,
Thine ear of Heaven's free welcome fail,
And thou a willing captive be,
Thyself thy own dark jail?

'Oh, doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll,
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul!

'To doubt the love that fain would break
The fetters from thy self-bound limb;
And dream that God can thee forsake
As thou forsakest Him!'

1863.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS.

O FRIENDS! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal for God
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds:
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God! He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God.

Ye praise His justice; even such
His pitying love I deem:
Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know:
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruisëd reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee!

1865.

THE COMMON QUESTION.

Behind us at our evening meal
The gray bird ate his fill,
Swung downward by a single claw,
And wiped his hookëd bill.

He shook his wings and crimson tail,
And set his head aslant,
And, in his sharp, impatient way,
Asked, 'What does Charlie want?'

'Fie, silly bird!' I answered, 'tuck
Your head beneath your wing,
And go to sleep;'—but o'er and o'er
He asked the self-same thing.

Then, smiling, to myself I said:
How like are men and birds!
We all are saying what he says,
In action or in words.

The boy with whip and top and drum,
The girl with hoop and doll,
And men with lands and houses, ask
The question of Poor Poll.

However full, with something more
We fain the bag would cram;
We sigh above our crowded nets
For fish that never swam.

No bounty of indulgent Heaven
The vague desire can stay;
Self-love is still a Tartar mill
For grinding prayers alway.

The dear God hears and pities all;
He knoweth all our wants;
And what we blindly ask of Him
His love withholds or grants.

And so I sometimes think our prayers
Might well be merged in one;
And nest and perch and hearth and church
Repeat, 'Thy will be done.'

1866.

OUR MASTER.

Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow
The mists of earth away!
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
How wide and far we stray!

Hush every lip, close every book,
The strife of tongues forbear;
Why forward reach, or backward look,
For love that clasps like air?

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down:
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For Him no depths can drown.

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,
The lineaments restore
Of Him we know in outward shape
And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign;
The world's long hope is dim;
The weary centuries watch in vain
The clouds of heaven for Him.

Death comes, life goes; the asking eye
And ear are answerless;
The grave is dumb, the hollow sky
Is sad with silentness.

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John His smile of love,
With Peter His rebuke.

In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is His own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name.

Our Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

Thou judgest us; Thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn;
The love that draws us nearer Thee
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to Thy sight;
And, naked to Thy glance,
Our secret sins are in the light
Of Thy pure countenance.

Thy healing pains, a keen distress
Thy tender light shines in;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,
Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to Thee,
And Thou rejectest none.

To Thee our full humanity,
Its joys and pains, belong;
The wrong of man to man on Thee
Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates Thee, who loves becomes
Therein to Thee allied;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
In Thee are multiplied.

Deep strike Thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most divine,
The flower of man and God!

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noon-day sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in Thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render Thee
Is still our Father's own;
No jealous claim or rivalry
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do Thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds,
And simple trust can find Thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self Thy service hath,
No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness, death
Our life, apart from Thine.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,
All labor vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy Cross
Is better than the sun.

Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven!

How vain, secure in all Thou art,
Our noisy championship!
The sighing of the contrite heart
Is more than flattering lip.

Not Thine the bigot's partial plea,
Nor Thine the zealot's ban;
Thou well canst spare a love of Thee
Which ends in hate of man.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may Thy service be?—
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,
We pile no graven stone;
He serves Thee best who loveth most
His brothers and Thy own.

Thy litanies, sweet offices
Of love and gratitude;
Thy sacramental liturgies,
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
The vaulted nave around,
In vain the minster turret lift
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring Thy Christmas bells,
Thy inward altars raise;
Its faith and hope Thy canticles,
And its obedience praise!

1866.

THE MEETING.

The two speakers in the meeting referred to in this poem were Avis Keene, whose very presence was a benediction, a woman lovely in spirit and person, whose words seemed a message of love and tender concern to her hearers; and Sibyl Jones, whose inspired eloquence and rare spirituality impressed all who knew her. In obedience to her apprehended duty she made visits of Christian love to various parts of Europe, and to the West Coast of Africa and Palestine.

The elder folks shook hands at last,
Down seat by seat the signal passed.
To simple ways like ours unused,
Half solemnized and half amused,
With long-drawn breath and shrug, my guest
His sense of glad relief expressed.
Outside, the hills lay warm in sun;
The cattle in the meadow-run
Stood half-leg deep; a single bird
The green repose above us stirred.
'What part or lot have you,' he said,
'In these dull rites of drowsy-head?
Is silence worship? Seek it where
It soothes with dreams the summer air,
Not in this close and rude-benched hall,
But where soft lights and shadows fall,
And all the slow, sleep-walking hours
Glide soundless over grass and flowers!
From time and place and form apart,
Its holy ground the human heart,
Nor ritual-bound nor templeward
Walks the free spirit of the Lord!
Our common Master did not pen
His followers up from other men;
His service liberty indeed,
He built no church, He framed no creed;

But while the saintly Pharisee
Made broader his phylactery,
As from the synagogue was seen
The dusty-sandalled Nazarene
Through ripening cornfields lead the way
Upon the awful Sabbath day,
His sermons were the healthful talk
That shorter made the mountain-walk,
His wayside texts were flowers and birds,
Where mingled with His gracious words
The rustle of the tamarisk-tree
And ripple-wash of Galilee.'

'Thy words are well, O friend,' I said;
'Unmeasured and unlimited,
With noiseless slide of stone to stone,
The mystic Church of God has grown.
Invisible and silent stands
The temple never made with hands,
Unheard the voices still and small
Of its unseen confessional.
He needs no special place of prayer
Whose hearing ear is everywhere;
He brings not back the childish days
That ringed the earth with stones of praise,
Roofed Karnak's hall of gods, and laid
The plinths of Philæ's colonnade.
Still less He owns the selfish good
And sickly growth of solitude,—
The worthless grace that, out of sight,
Flowers in the desert anchorite;
Dissevered from the suffering whole,
Love hath no power to save a soul.
Not out of Self, the origin
And native air and soil of sin,
The living waters spring and flow,
The trees with leaves of healing grow.

'Dream not, O friend, because I seek
This quiet shelter twice a week,
I better deem its pine-laid floor
Than breezy hill or sea-sung shore;
But nature is not solitude:
She crowds us with her thronging wood;
Her many hands reach out to us,
Her many tongues are garrulous;
Perpetual riddles of surprise
She offers to our ears and eyes;
She will not leave our senses still,
But drags them captive at her will:
And, making earth too great for heaven,
She hides the Giver in the given.

'And so I find it well to come
For deeper rest to this still room,
For here the habit of the soul
Feels less the outer world's control;
The strength of mutual purpose pleads
More earnestly our common needs;
And from the silence multiplied
By these still forms on either side,
The world that time and sense have known
Falls off and leaves us God alone.

'Yet rarely through the charmed repose
Unmixed the stream of motive flows,
A flavor of its many springs,
The tints of earth and sky it brings;
In the still waters needs must be
Some shade of human sympathy;
And here, in its accustomed place,
I look on memory's dearest face;
The blind by-sitter guesseth not
What shadow haunts that vacant spot;
No eyes save mine alone can see
The love wherewith it welcomes me!
And still, with those alone my kin,
In doubt and weakness, want and sin,
I bow my head, my heart I bare,
As when that face was living there,
And strive (too oft, alas! in vain)
The peace of simple trust to gain,
Fold fancy's restless wings, and lay
The idols of my heart away.

'Welcome the silence all unbroken,
Nor less the words of fitness spoken,—
Such golden words as hers for whom
Our autumn flowers have just made room;
Whose hopeful utterance through and through
The freshness of the morning blew;
Who loved not less the earth that light
Fell on it from the heavens in sight,
But saw in all fair forms more fair
The Eternal beauty mirrored there.
Whose eighty years but added grace
And saintlier meaning to her face,—
The look of one who bore away
Glad tidings from the hills of day,
While all our hearts went forth to meet
The coming of her beautiful feet!
Or haply hers, whose pilgrim tread
Is in the paths where Jesus led;

Who dreams her childhood's sabbath dream
By Jordan's willow-shaded stream,
And, of the hymns of hope and faith,
Sung by the monks of Nazareth,
Hears pious echoes, in the call
To prayer, from Moslem minarets fall,
Repeating where His works were wrought
The lesson that her Master taught,
Of whom an elder Sibyl gave,
The prophecies of Cumæ's cave!

'I ask no organ's soulless breath
To drone the themes of life and death,
No altar candle-lit by day,
No ornate wordsman's rhetoric-play,
No cool philosophy to teach
Its bland audacities of speech
To double-tasked idolaters
Themselves their gods and worshippers,
No pulpit hammered by the fist
Of loud-asserting dogmatist,
Who borrows for the Hand of love
The smoking thunderbolts of Jove.
I know how well the fathers taught,
What work the later schoolmen wrought;
I reverence old-time faith and men,
But God is near us now as then;
His force of love is still unspent,
His hate of sin as imminent;
And still the measure of our needs
Outgrows the cramping bounds of creeds;
The manna gathered yesterday
Already savors of decay;
Doubts to the world's child-heart unknown
Question us now from star and stone;
Too little or too much we know,
And sight is swift and faith is slow;
The power is lost to self-deceive
With shallow forms of make-believe.
We walk at high noon, and the bells
Call to a thousand oracles,
But the sound deafens, and the light
Is stronger than our dazzled sight;
The letters of the sacred Book
Glimmer and swim beneath our look;
Still struggles in the Age's breast
With deepening agony of quest
The old entreaty: "Art Thou He,
Or look we for the Christ to be?"

'God should be most where man is least:
So, where is neither church nor priest,
And never rag of form or creed
To clothe the nakedness of need,—
Where farmer-folk in silence meet,—
I turn my bell-unsummoned feet;
I lay the critic's glass aside,
I tread upon my lettered pride,
And, lowest-seated, testify
To the oneness of humanity;
Confess the universal want,
And share whatever Heaven may grant.
He findeth not who seeks his own,
The soul is lost that's saved alone.
Not on one favored forehead fell
Of old the fire-tongued miracle,
But flamed o'er all the thronging host
The baptism of the Holy Ghost;
Heart answers heart: in one desire
The blending lines of prayer aspire;
"Where, in My name, meet two or three,"
Our Lord hath said, "I there will be!"

'So sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries.
The sphere of the supernal powers
Impinges on this world of ours.
The low and dark horizon lifts,
To light the scenic terror shifts;
The breath of a diviner air
Blows down the answer of a prayer:
That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt
A great compassion clasps about,
And law and goodness, love and force,
Are wedded fast beyond divorce.
Then duty leaves to love its task,
The beggar Self forgets to ask;
With smile of trust and folded hands,
The passive soul in waiting stands
To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,
The One true Life its own renew.

'So to the calmly gathered thought
The innermost of truth is taught,
The mystery dimly understood,
That love of God is love of good,
And, chiefly, its divinest trace
In Him of Nazareth's holy face;
That to be saved is only this,—
Salvation from our selfishness,

From more than elemental fire,
The soul's unsanctified desire,
From sin itself, and not the pain
That warns us of its chafing chain;
That worship's deeper meaning lies
In mercy, and not sacrifice,
Not proud humilities of sense
And posturing of penitence,
But love's unforced obedience;
That Book and Church and Day are given
For man, not God,—for earth, not heaven,—
The blessed means to holiest ends,
Not masters, but benignant friends;
That the dear Christ dwells not afar,
The king of some remoter star,
Listening, at times, with flattered ear
To homage wrung from selfish fear,
But here, amidst the poor and blind,
The bound and suffering of our kind,
In works we do, in prayers we pray,
Life of our life, He lives to-day.'

1858

THE CLEAR VISION.

I DID but dream. I never knew
What charms our sternest season wore.
Was never yet the sky so blue,
Was never earth so white before.
Till now I never saw the glow
Of sunset on yon hills of snow,
And never learned the bough's designs
Of beauty in its leafless lines.

Did ever such a morning break
As that my eastern windows see?
Did ever such a moonlight take
Weird photographs of shrub and tree?
Rang ever bells so wild and fleet
The music of the winter street?
Was ever yet a sound by half
So merry as yon school-boy's laugh?

O Earth! with gladness overfraught,
No added charm thy face hath found;
Within my heart the change is wrought,
My footsteps make enchanted ground.
From couch of pain and curtained room
Forth to thy light and air I come,
To find in all that meets my eyes
The freshness of a glad surprise.

Fair seem these winter days, and soon
Shall blow the warm west-winds of spring,
To set the unbound rills in tune
And hither urge the bluebird's wing.
The vales shall laugh in flowers, the woods
Grow misty green with leafing buds,
And violets and wind-flowers sway
Against the throbbing heart of May.

Break forth, my lips, in praise, and own
The wiser love severely kind;
Since, richer for its chastening grown,
I see, whereas I once was blind.
The world, O Father! hath not wronged
With loss the life by Thee prolonged;
But still, with every added year,
More beautiful Thy works appear!

As Thou hast made Thy world without,
Make Thou more fair my world within;
Shine through its lingering clouds of doubt;
Rebuke its haunting shapes of sin;
Fill, brief or long, my granted span
Of life with love to Thee and man;
Strike when Thou wilt the hour of rest,
But let my last days be my best!

2d mo., 1868.

DIVINE COMPASSION.

LONG since, a dream of heaven I had,
And still the vision haunts me oft;
I see the saints in white robes clad,
The martyrs with their palms aloft;
But hearing still, in middle song,
The ceaseless dissonance of wrong;
And shrinking, with hid faces, from the strain
Of sad, beseeching eyes, full of remorse and pain.

The glad song falters to a wail,
The harping sinks to low lament;
Before the still unlifted veil
I see the crownëd foreheads bent,
Making more sweet the heavenly air
With breathings of unselfish prayer;
And a Voice saith: 'O Pity which is pain,
O Love that weeps, fill up My sufferings which remain!

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'Shall souls redeemed by Me refuse
To share My sorrow in their turn?
Or, sin-forgiven, My gift abuse
Of peace with selfish unconcern?
Has saintly ease no pitying care?
Has faith no work, and love no prayer?
While sin remains, and souls in darkness dwell,
Can heaven itself be heaven, and look unmoved on hell?'

Then through the Gates of Pain, I dream,
A wind of heaven blows coolly in;
Fainter the awful discords seem,
The smoke of torment grows more thin,
Tears quench the burning soil, and thence
Spring sweet, pale flowers of penitence:
And through the dreary realm of man's despair,
Star-crowned an angel walks, and lo!
God's hope is there!

Is it a dream? Is heaven so high
That pity cannot breathe its air?
Its happy eyes forever dry,
Its holy lips without a prayer!
My God! my God! if thither led
By Thy free grace unmerited,
No crown nor palm be mine, but let me keep
A heart that still can feel, and eyes that still can weep.

1868.

THE PRAYER-SEEKER.

Along the aisle where prayer was made,
A woman, all in black arrayed,
Close-veiled, between the kneeling host,
With gliding motion of a ghost,
Passed to the desk, and laid thereon
A scroll which bore these words alone,
Pray for me!

Back from the place of worshipping
She glided like a guilty thing:
The rustle of her draperies, stirred
By hurrying feet, alone was heard;
While, full of awe, the preacher read,
As out into the dark she sped:
Pray for me!

Back to the night from whence she came,
To unimagined grief or shame!
Across the threshold of that door
None knew the burden that she bore;
Alone she left the written scroll,
The legend of a troubled soul,—
Pray for me!

Glide on, poor ghost of woe or sin!
Thou leav'st a common need within;
Each bears, like thee, some nameless weight,
Some misery inarticulate,
Some secret sin, some shrouded dread,
Some household sorrow all unsaid.
Pray for us!

Pass on! The type of all thou art,
Sad witness to the common heart!
With face in veil and seal on lip,
In mute and strange companionship,
Like thee we wander to and fro,
Dumbly imploring as we go:
Pray for us!

Ah, who shall pray, since he who pleads
Our want perchance hath greater needs?
Yet they who make their loss the gain
Of others shall not ask in vain,
And Heaven bends low to hear the prayer
Of love from lips of self-despair:
Pray for us!

In vain remorse and fear and hate
Beat with bruised hands against a fate
Whose walls of iron only move
And open to the touch of love.
He only feels his burdens fall
Who, taught by suffering, pities all.
Pray for us!

He prayeth best who leaves unguessed
The mystery of another's breast.
Why cheeks grow pale, why eyes o'erflow,
Or heads are white, thou need'st not know.
Enough to note by many a sign
That every heart hath needs like thine.
Pray for us!

1870.

THE BREWING OF SOMA.

'These libations mixed with milk have been prepared for Indra; offer Soma to the drinker of Soma.'—*Vashista*, translated by MAX MÜLLER.

THE fagots blazed, the caldron's smoke
Up through the green wood curled;
'Bring honey from the hollow oak,
Bring milky sap,' the brewers spoke,
In the childhood of the world.

And brewed they well or brewed they ill,
The priests thrust in their rods,
First tasted, and then drank their fill,
And shouted, with one voice and will,
'Behold the drink of gods!'

They drank, and lo! in heart and brain
A new, glad life began;
The gray of hair grew young again,
The sick man laughed away his pain,
The cripple leaped and ran.

'Drink, mortals, what the gods have sent,
Forget your long annoy.'
So sang the priests. From tent to tent
The Soma's sacred madness went,
A storm of drunken joy.

Then knew each rapt inebriate
A winged and glorious birth,
Soared upward, with strange joy elate,
Beat, with dazed head, Varuna's gate,
And, sobered, sank to earth.

The land with Soma's praises rang;
On Gihon's banks of shade
Its hymns the dusky maidens sang;
In joy of life or mortal pang
All men to Soma prayed.

The morning twilight of the race
Sends down these matin psalms;
And still with wondering eyes we trace
The simple prayers to Soma's grace,
That Vedic verse embalms.

As in that child-world's early year,
Each after age has striven
By music, incense, vigils drear,
And trance, to bring the skies more near,
Or lift men up to heaven!

Some fever of the blood and brain,
Some self-exalting spell,
The scourger's keen delight of pain,
The Dervish dance, the Orphic strain,
The wild-haired Bacchant's yell,—

The desert's hair-grown hermit sunk
The saner brute below;
The naked Santon, hashish-drunk,
The cloister madness of the monk,
The fakir's torture-show!

And yet the past comes round again,
And new doth old fulfil;
In sensual transports wild as vain
We brew in many a Christian fane
The heathen Soma still!

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessing fall
As fell Thy manna down.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm!

1872.

A WOMAN.

Oh, dwarfed and wronged, and stained with ill,
Behold! thou art a wóman still!
And, by that sacred name and dear,
I bid thy better self appear.
Still, through thy foul disguise, I see
The rudimental purity,
That, spite of change and loss, makes good
Thy birthright-claim of womanhood;
An inward loathing, deep, intense;
A shame that is half innocence,
Cast off the grave-clothes of thy sin!
Rise from the dust thou liest in,
As Mary rose at Jesus' word,
Redeemed and white before the Lord!
Reclaim thy lost soul! In His name,
Rise up, and break thy bonds of shame.
Art weak? He 's strong. Art fearful? Hear
The world's O'ercomer: 'Be of cheer!'
What lip shall judge when He approves?
Who dare to scorn the child He loves?

1872.

THE PRAYER OF AGASSIZ.

The island of Penikese in Buzzard's Bay was given by Mr. John Anderson to Agassiz for the uses of a summer school of natural history. A large barn was cleared and improvised as a lecture-room. Here, on the first morning of the school, all the company was gathered. 'Agassiz had arranged no programme of exercises,' says Mrs. Agassiz, in *Louis Agassiz; his Life and Correspondence*, 'trusting to the interest of the occasion to suggest what might best be said or done. But, as he looked upon his pupils gathered there to study nature with him, by an impulse as natural as it was unpremeditated, he called upon them to join in silently asking God's blessing on their work together. The pause was broken by the first words of an address no less fervent than its unspoken prelude.' This was in the summer of 1873, and Agassiz died the December following.

On the isle of Penikese,
Ringed about by sapphire seas,
Fanned by breezes salt and cool,
Stood the Master with his school.
Over sails that not in vain
Wooed the west-wind's steady strain,
Line of coast that low and far
Stretched its undulating bar,
Wings aslant across the rim
Of the waves they stooped to skim,
Rock and isle and glistening bay,
Fell the beautiful white day.

Said the Master to the youth:
'We have come in search of truth,
Trying with uncertain key
Door by door of mystery;
We are reaching, through His laws,
To the garment-hem of Cause,
Him, the endless, unbegun,
The Unnamable, the One
Light of all our light the Source,
Life of life, and Force of force.
As with fingers of the blind,
We are groping here to find
What the hieroglyphics mean
Of the Unseen in the seen,
What the Thought which underlies
Nature's masking and disguise,
What it is that hides beneath
Blight and bloom and birth and death.
By past efforts unavailing,
Doubt and error, loss and failing,
Of our weakness made aware,
On the threshold of our task
Let us light and guidance ask,
Let us pause in silent prayer!'

Then the Master in his place
Bowed his head a little space,
And the leaves by soft airs stirred,
Lapse of wave and cry of bird,
Left the solemn hush unbroken
Of that wordless prayer unspoken,
While its wish, on earth unsaid,
Rose to heaven interpreted.
As, in life's best hours, we hear
By the spirit's finer ear

His low voice within us, thus
The All-Father heareth us;
And His holy ear we pain
With our noisy words and vain.
Not for Him our violence
Storming at the gates of sense,
His the primal language, His
The eternal silences!

Even the careless heart was moved,
And the doubting gave assent,
With a gesture reverent,
To the Master well-beloved.
As thin mists are glorified
By the light they cannot hide,
All who gazed upon him saw,
Through its veil of tender awe,
How his face was still uplit
By the old sweet look of it,
Hopeful, trustful, full of cheer,
And the love that casts out fear.
Who the secret may declare
Of that brief, unuttered prayer?
Did the shade before him come
Of th' inevitable doom,
Of the end of earth so near,
And Eternity's new year?

In the lap of sheltering seas
Rests the isle of Penikese;
But the lord of the domain
Comes not to his own again:
Where the eyes that follow fail,
On a vaster sea his sail
Drifts beyond our beck and hail.
Other lips within its bound
Shall the laws of life expound;
Other eyes from rock and shell
Read the world's old riddles well:
But when breezes light and bland
Blow from Summer's blossomed land,
When the air is glad with wings,
And the blithe song-sparrow sings,
Many an eye with his still face
Shall the living ones displace,
Many an ear the word shall seek
He alone could fitly speak.
And one name forevermore
Shall be uttered o'er and o'er
By the waves that kiss the shore,
By the curlew's whistle sent
Down the cool, sea-scented air;
In all voices known to her,
Nature owns her worshipper,
Half in triumph, half lament.
Thither Love shall tearful turn,
Friendship pause uncovered there,
And the wisest reverence learn
From the Master's silent prayer.

1873.

IN QUEST.

Have I not voyaged, friend beloved, with thee
On the great waters of the unsounded sea,
Momently listening with suspended oar
For the low rote of waves upon a shore
Changeless as heaven, where never fog-cloud drifts
Over its windless wood, nor mirage lifts
The steadfast hills; where never birds of doubt
Sing to mislead, and every dream dies out,
And the dark riddles which perplex us here
In the sharp solvent of its light are clear?
Thou knowest how vain our quest; how, soon or late,
The baffling tides and circles of debate
Swept back our bark unto its starting-place,
Where, looking forth upon the blank, gray space,
And round about us seeing, with sad eyes,
The same old difficult hills and cloud-cold skies,
We said: 'This outward search availeth not
To find Him. He is farther than we thought,
Or, haply, nearer. To this very spot
Whereon we wait, this commonplace of home,
As to the well of Jacob, He may come
And tell us all things.' As I listened there,
Through the expectant silences of prayer,
Somewhat I seemed to hear, which hath to me
Been hope, strength, comfort, and I give it thee.

'The riddle of the world is understood
Only by him who feels that God is good,
As only he can feel who makes his love
The ladder of his faith, and climbs above
On th' rounds of his best instincts; draws no line
Between mere human goodness and divine,
But, judging God by what in him is best,
With a child's trust leans on a Father's breast,
And hears unmoved the old creeds babble still
Of kingly power and dread caprice of will,
Chary of blessing, prodigal of curse,
The pitiless doomsman of the universe.
Can Hatred ask for love? Can Selfishness
Invite to self-denial? Is He less
Than man in kindly dealing? Can He break
His own great law of fatherhood, forsake
And curse His children? Not for earth and heaven
Can separate tables of the law be given.
No rule can bind which He himself denies;
The truths of time are not eternal lies.'

So heard I; and the chaos round me spread
To light and order grew; and, 'Lord,' I said,
'Our sins are our tormentors, worst of all
Felt in distrustful shame that dares not call
Upon Thee as our Father. We have set
A strange god up, but Thou remainest yet.
All that I feel of pity Thou hast known
Before I was; my best is all Thy own.
From Thy great heart of goodness mine but drew
Wishes and prayers; but Thou, O Lord, wilt do,
In Thy own time, by ways I cannot see,
All that I feel when I am nearest Thee!'

1873.

THE FRIEND'S BURIAL.

My thoughts are all in yonder town,
Where, wept by many tears,
To-day my mother's friend lays down
The burden of her years.

True as in life, no poor disguise
Of death with her is seen,
And on her simple casket lies
No wreath of bloom and green.

Oh, not for her the florist's art,
The mocking weeds of woe;
Dear memories in each mourner's heart
Like heaven's white lilies blow.

And all about the softening air
Of new-born sweetness tells,
And the ungathered May-flowers wear
The tints of ocean shells.

The old, assuring miracle
Is fresh as heretofore;
And earth takes up its parable
Of life from death once more.

Here organ-swell and church-bell toll
Methinks but discord were;
The prayerful silence of the soul
Is best befitting her.

No sound should break the quietude
Alike of earth and sky;
O wandering wind in Seabrook wood,
Breathe but a half-heard sigh!

Sing softly, spring-bird, for her sake;
And thou not distant sea,
Lapse lightly as if Jesus spake,
And thou wert Galilee!

For all her quiet life flowed on
As meadow streamlets flow,
Where fresher green reveals alone
The noiseless ways they go.

From her loved place of prayer I see
The plain-robed mourners pass,
With slow feet treading reverently
The graveyard's springing grass.

Make room, O mourning ones, for me,
Where, like the friends of Paul,
That you no more her face shall see
You sorrow most of all.

Her path shall brighten more and more
Unto the perfect day;
She cannot fail of peace who bore
Such peace with her away.

O sweet, calm face that seemed to wear
The look of sins forgiven!
O voice of prayer that seemed to bear
Our own needs up to heaven!

How reverent in our midst she stood,
Or knelt in grateful praise!
What grace of Christian womanhood
Was in her household ways!

For still her holy living meant
No duty left undone;
The heavenly and the human blent
Their kindred loves in one.

And if her life small leisure found
For feasting ear and eye,
And Pleasure, on her daily round,
She passed unpausing by,

Yet with her went a secret sense
Of all things sweet and fair,
And Beauty's gracious providence
Refreshed her unaware.

She kept her line of rectitude
With love's unconscious ease;
Her kindly instincts understood
All gentle courtesies.

An inborn charm of graciousness
Made sweet her smile and tone,
And glorified her farm-wife dress
With beauty not its own.

The dear Lord's best interpreters
Are humble human souls;
The Gospel of a life like hers
Is more than books or scrolls.

From scheme and creed the light goes out,
The saintly fact survives;
The blessed Master none can doubt
Revealed in holy lives.

1873.

A CHRISTMAS CARMEN.

I.

Sound over all waters, reach out from all lands,
The chorus of voices, the clasping of hands;
Sing hymns that were sung by the stars of the morn,
Sing songs of the angels when Jesus was born!
With glad jubilations
Bring hope to the nations!
The dark night is ending and dawn has begun:
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one!

II.

Sing the bridal of nations! with chorals of love
Sing out the war-vulture and sing in the dove,
Till the hearts of the peoples keep time in accord,
And the voice of the world is the voice of the Lord!
Clasp hands of the nations
In strong gratulations:
The dark night is ending and dawn has begun;
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one!

III.

Blow, bugles of battle, the marches of peace;
East, west, north, and south let the long quarrel cease:
Sing the song of great joy that the angels began,
Sing of glory to God and of good-will to man!
Hark! joining in chorus
The heavens bend o'er us!
The dark night is ending and dawn has begun;
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one!

1873.

VESTA.

O CHRIST of God! whose life and death
Our own have reconciled,
Most quietly, most tenderly
Take home Thy star-named child!

Thy grace is in her patient eyes,
Thy words are on her tongue;
The very silence round her seems
As if the angels sung.

Her smile is as a listening child's
Who hears its mother call;
The lilies of Thy perfect peace
About her pillow fall.

She leans from out our clinging arms
To rest herself in Thine;
Alone to Thee, dear Lord, can we
Our well-beloved resign!

Oh, less for her than for ourselves
We bow our heads and pray;
Her setting star, like Bethlehem's,
To Thee shall point the way!

1874.

CHILD-SONGS.

STILL linger in our noon of time
And on our Saxon tongue
The echoes of the home-born hymns
The Aryan mothers sung.

And childhood had its litanies
In every age and clime;
The earliest cradles of the race
Were rocked to poet's rhyme.

Nor sky, nor wave, nor tree, nor flower,
Nor green earth's virgin sod,
So moved the singer's heart of old
As these small ones of God.

The mystery of unfolding life
Was more than dawning morn,
Than opening flower or crescent moon
The human soul new-born!

And still to childhood's sweet appeal
The heart of genius turns,
And more than all the sages teach
From lisping voices learns,—

The voices loved of him who sang,
Where Tweed and Teviot glide,
That sound to-day on all the winds
That blow from Rydal-side,—

Heard in the Teuton's household songs,
And folk-lore of the Finn,
Where'er to holy Christmas hearths
The Christ-child enters in!

Before life's sweetest mystery still
The heart in reverence kneels;
The wonder of the primal birth
The latest mother feels.

We need love's tender lessons taught
As only weakness can;
God hath His small interpreters;
The child must teach the man.

We wander wide through evil years,
Our eyes of faith grow dim;
But he is freshest from His hands
And nearest unto Him!

And haply, pleading long with Him
For sin-sick hearts and cold,
The angels of our childhood still
The Father's face behold.

Of such the kingdom!—Teach Thou us,
O Master most divine,
To feel the deep significance
Of these wise words of Thine!

The haughty eye shall seek in vain
What innocence beholds;
No cunning finds the key of heaven,
No strength its gate unfolds.

Alone to guilelessness and love
That gate shall open fall;
The mind of pride is nothingness,
The childlike heart is all!

1875.

THE HEALER.

TO A YOUNG PHYSICIAN, WITH DORÉ'S PICTURE OF CHRIST HEALING THE SICK.

So stood of old the holy Christ
Amidst the suffering throng;
With whom His lightest touch sufficed
To make the weakest strong.

That healing gift He lends to them
Who use it in His name;
The power that filled His garment's hem
Is evermore the same.

For lo! in human hearts unseen
The Healer dwelleth still,
And they who make His temples clean
The best subserve His will.

The holiest task by Heaven decreed,
An errand all divine,
The burden of our common need
To render less is thine.

The paths of pain are thine. Go forth
With patience, trust, and hope;
The sufferings of a sin-sick earth
Shall give thee ample scope.

Beside the unveiled mysteries
Of life and death go stand,
With guarded lips and reverent eyes
And pure of heart and hand.

So shalt thou be with power endued
From Him who went about
The Syrian hillsides doing good,
And casting demons out.

That Good Physician liveth yet
Thy friend and guide to be;
The Healer by Gennesaret
Shall walk the rounds with thee.

1875.

THE TWO ANGELS.

God called the nearest angels who dwell
with Him above:
The tenderest one was Pity, the dearest
one was Love.

'Arise,' He said, 'My angels! a wail of
woe and sin
Steals through the gates of heaven, and
saddens all within.

'My harps take up the mournful strain
that from a lost world swells,
The smoke of torment clouds the light
and blights the asphodels.

'Fly downward to that under world, and
on its souls of pain
Let Love drop smiles like sunshine, and
Pity tears like rain!'

Two faces bowed before the Throne, veiled
in their golden hair;
Four white wings lessened swiftly down
the dark abyss of air.

The way was strange, the flight was long;
at last the angels came
Where swung the lost and nether world,
red-wrapped in rayless flame.

There Pity, shuddering, wept; but Love,
with faith too strong for fear,
Took heart from God's almightiness and
smiled a smile of cheer.

And lo! that tear of Pity quenched the
flame whereon it fell,
And, with the sunshine of that smile,
hope entered into hell!

Two unveiled faces full of joy looked
upward to the Throne,
Four white wings folded at the feet of
Him who sat thereon!

And deeper than the sound of seas, more
soft than falling flake,
Amidst the hush of wing and song the
Voice Eternal spake:

'Welcome, My angels! ye have brought
a holier joy to heaven;
Henceforth its sweetest song shall be the
song of sin forgiven!'

1875.

OVERRULED.

THE threads our hands in blindness spin
No self-determined plan weaves in;
The shuttle of the unseen powers
Works out a pattern not as ours.

Ah! small the choice of him who sings
What sound shall leave the smitten strings;
Fate holds and guides the hand of art;
The singer's is the servant's part.

The wind-harp chooses not the tone
That through its trembling threads is blown;
The patient organ cannot guess
What hand its passive keys shall press.

Through wish, resolve, and act, our will
Is moved by undreamed forces still;
And no man measures in advance
His strength with untried circumstance.

As streams take hue from shade and sun,
As runs the life the song must run;
But, glad or sad, to His good end
God grant the varying notes may tend!

1877.

HYMN OF THE DUNKERS.

KLOSTER KEDAR, EPHRATA, PENNSYLVANIA (1738).

SISTER MARIA CHRISTINA *sings.*

WAKE, sisters, wake! the day-star shines;
Above Ephrata's eastern pines
The dawn is breaking, cool and calm.
Wake, sisters, wake to prayer and psalm!

Praised be the Lord for shade and light,
For toil by day, for rest by night!
Praised be His name who deigns to bless
Our Kedar of the wilderness!

Our refuge when the spoiler's hand
Was heavy on our native land;
And freedom, to her children due,
The wolf and vulture only knew.

We praised Him when to prison led,
We owned Him when the stake blazed red;
We knew, whatever might befall,
His love and power were over all.

He heard our prayers; with outstretched arm
He led us forth from cruel harm;
Still, wheresoe'er our steps were bent,
His cloud and fire before us went!

The watch of faith and prayer He set,
We kept it then, we keep it yet.
At midnight, crow of cock, or noon,
He cometh sure, He cometh soon.

He comes to chasten, not destroy,
To purge the earth from sin's alloy.
At last, at last shall all confess
His mercy as His righteousness.

The dead shall live, the sick be whole,
The scarlet sin be white as wool;
No discord mar below, above,
The music of eternal love!

Sound, welcome trump, the last alarm!
Lord God of hosts, make bare Thine arm,
Fulfil this day our long desire,
Make sweet and clean the world with fire!

Sweep, flaming besom, sweep from sight
The lies of time; be swift to smite,
Sharp sword of God, all idols down,
Genevan creed and Roman crown.

Quake, earth, through all thy zones, till all
The fanes of pride and priestcraft fall;
And lift thou up in place of them
Thy gates of pearl, Jerusalem!

Lo! rising from baptismal flame,
Transfigured, glorious, yet the same,
Within the heavenly city's bound
Our Kloster Kedar shall be found.

He cometh soon! at dawn or noon
Or set of sun, He cometh soon.
Our prayers shall meet Him on His way;
Wake, sisters, wake! arise and pray!

1877.

GIVING AND TAKING.

I have attempted to put in English verse a prose translation of a poem by Tinnevaluva, a Hindoo poet of the third century of our era.

Who gives and hides the giving hand,
Nor counts on favor, fame, or praise,
Shall find his smallest gift outweighs
The burden of the sea and land.

Who gives to whom hath naught been given,
His gift in need, though small indeed
As is the grass-blade's wind-blown seed,
Is large as earth and rich as heaven.

Forget it not, O man, to whom
A gift shall fall, while yet on earth;
Yea, even to thy seven-fold birth
Recall it in the lives to come.

Who broods above a wrong in thought
Sins much; but greater sin is his
Who, fed and clothed with kindnesses,
Shall count the holy alms as naught.

Who dares to curse the hands that bless
Shall know of sin the deadliest cost;
The patience of the heavens is lost
Beholding man's unthankfulness.

For he who breaks all laws may still
In Sivam's mercy be forgiven;
But none can save, in earth or heaven,
The wretch who answers good with ill.

1877.

THE VISION OF ECHARD.

The Benedictine Echard
Sat by the wayside well,
Where Marsberg sees the bridal
Of the Sarre and the Moselle.

Fair with its sloping vineyards
And tawny chestnut bloom,
The happy vale Ausonius sung
For holy Treves made room.

On the shrine Helena builded
To keep the Christ coat well,
On minster tower and kloster cross,
The westering sunshine fell.

There, where the rock-hewn circles
O'erlooked the Roman's game,
The veil of sleep fell on him,
And his thought a dream became.

He felt the heart of silence
Throb with a soundless word,
And by the inward ear alone
A spirit's voice he heard.

And the spoken word seemed written
On air and wave and sod,
And the bending walls of sapphire
Blazed with the thought of God:

'What lack I, O My children?
All things are in My hand;
The vast earth and the awful stars
I hold as grains of sand.

'Need I your alms? The silver
And gold are Mine alone;
The gifts ye bring before Me
Were evermore My own.

'Heed I the noise of viols,
Your pomp of masque and show?
Have I not dawns and sunsets?
Have I not winds that blow?

'Do I smell your gums of incense?
Is My ear with chantings fed?
Taste I your wine of worship,
Or eat your holy bread?

'Of rank and name and honors
Am I vain as ye are vain?
What can Eternal Fulness
From your lip-service gain?

'Ye make Me not your debtor
Who serve yourselves alone;
Ye boast to Me of homage
Whose gain is all your own.

'For you I gave the prophets,
For you the Psalmist's lay:
For you the law's stone tables,
And holy book and day.

'Ye change to weary burdens
The helps that should uplift;
Ye lose in form the spirit,
The Giver in the gift.

'Who called ye to self-torment,
To fast and penance vain?
Dream ye Eternal Goodness
Has joy in mortal pain?

'For the death in life of Nitria,
For your Chartreuse ever dumb,
What better is the neighbor,
Or happier the home?

'Who counts his brother's welfare
As sacred as his own,
And loves, forgives, and pities,
He serveth Me alone.

'I note each gracious purpose,
Each kindly word and deed;
Are ye not all My children?
Shall not the Father heed?

'No prayer for light and guidance
Is lost upon Mine ear:
The child's cry in the darkness
Shall not the Father hear?

'I loathe your wrangling councils,
I tread upon your creeds;
Who made ye Mine avengers,
Or told ye of My needs;

'I bless men and ye curse them,
I love them and ye hate;
Ye bite and tear each other,
I suffer long and wait.

'Ye bow to ghastly symbols,
To cross and scourge and thorn;
Ye seek His Syrian manger
Who in the heart is born.

'For the dead Christ, not the living,
Ye watch His empty grave,
Whose life alone within you
Has power to bless and save.

'O blind ones, outward groping,
The idle quest forego;
Who listens to His inward voice
Alone of Him shall know.

'His love all love exceeding
The heart must needs recall,
Its self-surrendering freedom,
Its loss that gaineth all.

'Climb not the holy mountains,
Their eagles know not Me;
Seek not the Blessed Islands,
I dwell not in the sea.

'Gone is the mount of Meru,
The triple gods are gone,
And, deaf to all the lama's prayers,
The Buddha slumbers on.

'No more from rocky Horeb
The smitten waters gush;
Fallen is Bethel's ladder,
Quenched is the burning bush.

'The jewels of the Urim
And Thummim all are dim;
The fire has left the altar,
The sign the teraphim.

'No more in ark or hill grove
The Holiest abides;
Not in the scroll's dead letter
The eternal secret hides.

'The eye shall fail that searches
For Me the hollow sky;
The far is even as the near,
The low is as the high.

'What if the earth is hiding
Her old faiths, long outworn?
What is it to the changeless truth
That yours shall fail in turn?

'What if the o'erturned altar
Lays bare the ancient lie?
What if the dreams and legends
Of the world's childhood die?

'Have ye not still My witness
Within yourselves alway,
My hand that on the keys of life
For bliss or bale I lay?

'Still, in perpetual judgment,
I hold assize within,
With sure reward of holiness,
And dread rebuke of sin.

'A light, a guide, a warning,
A presence ever near,
Through the deep silence of the flesh
I reach the inward ear.

'My Gerizim and Ebal
Are in each human soul,
The still, small voice of blessing,
And Sinai's thunder-roll.

'The stern behest of duty,
The doom-book open thrown,
The heaven ye seek, the hell ye fear,
Are with yourselves alone.'

A gold and purple sunset
Flowed down the broad Moselle;
On hills of vine and meadow lands
The peace of twilight fell.

A slow, cool wind of evening
Blew over leaf and bloom;
And, faint and far, the Angelus
Rang from Saint Matthew's tomb.

Then up rose Master Echard,
And marvelled: 'Can it be
That here, in dream and vision,
The Lord hath talked with me?'

He went his way; behind him
The shrines of saintly dead,
The holy coat and nail of cross,
He left unvisited.

He sought the vale of Eltzbach
His burdened soul to free,
Where the foot-hills of the Eifel
Are glassed in Laachersee.

And, in his Order's kloster,
He sat, in night-long parle,
With Tauler of the Friends of God,
And Nicolas of Basle.

And lo! the twain made answer:
'Yea, brother, even thus
The Voice above all voices
Hath spoken unto us.

'The world will have its idols,
And flesh and sense their sign:
But the blinded eyes shall open,
And the gross ear be fine.

'What if the vision tarry?
God's time is always best;
The true Light shall be witnessed,
The Christ within confessed.

'In mercy or in judgment
He shall turn and overturn,
Till the heart shall be His temple
Where all of Him shall learn.'

1878.

INSCRIPTIONS.

ON A SUN-DIAL.

FOR DR. HENRY I. BOWDITCH.

WITH warning hand I mark Time's rapid flight
From life's glad morning to its solemn night;
Yet, through the dear God's love, I also show
There's Light above me by the Shade below.

1879.

ON A FOUNTAIN.

FOR DOROTHEA L. DIX.

STRANGER and traveller,
Drink freely and bestow
A kindly thought on her
Who bade this fountain flow,
Yet hath no other claim
Than as the minister
Of blessing in God's name.
Drink, and in His peace go!

1879.

THE MINISTER'S DAUGHTER.

IN the minister's morning sermon
He had told of the primal fall,
And how thenceforth the wrath of God
Rested on each and all.

And how of His will and pleasure,
All souls, save a chosen few,
Were doomed to the quenchless burning,
And held in the way thereto.

Yet never by faith's unreason
A saintlier soul was tried,
And never the harsh old lesson
A tenderer heart belied.

And, after the painful service
On that pleasant Sabbath day,
He walked with his little daughter
Through the apple-bloom of May.

Sweet in the fresh green meadows
Sparrow and blackbird sung;
Above him their tinted petals
The blossoming orchards hung.

Around on the wonderful glory
The minister looked and smiled;
'How good is the Lord who gives us
These gifts from His hand, my child!

'Behold in the bloom of apples
And the violets in the sward
A hint of the old, lost beauty
Of the Garden of the Lord!'

Then up spake the little maiden,
Treading on snow and pink:
'O father! these pretty blossoms
Are very wicked, I think.

'Had there been no Garden of Eden
There never had been a fall';
And if never a tree had blossomed
God would have loved us all.'

'Hush, child!' the father answered,
'By His decree man fell;
His ways are in clouds and darkness,
But He doeth all things well.

'And whether by His ordaining
To us cometh good or ill,
Joy or pain, or light or shadow,
We must fear and love Him still.'

'Oh, I fear Him!' said the daughter,
'And I try to love Him, too;
But I wish He was good and gentle,
Kind and loving as you.'

The minister groaned in spirit
As the tremulous lips of pain
And wide, wet eyes uplifted
Questioned his own in vain.

Bowing his head he pondered
The words of the little one;
Had he erred in his life-long teaching?
Had he wrong to his Master done?

To what grim and dreadful idol
Had he lent the holiest name?
Did his own heart, loving and human,
The God of his worship shame?

And lo! from the bloom and greenness,
From the tender skies above,
And the face of his little daughter,
He read a lesson of love.

No more as the cloudy terror
Of Sinai's mount of law,
But as Christ in the Syrian lilies
The vision of God he saw.

And, as when, in the clefts of Horeb,
Of old was His presence known,
The dread Ineffable Glory
Was Infinite Goodness alone.

Thereafter his hearers noted
In his prayers a tenderer strain,
And never the gospel of hatred
Burned on his lips again.

And the scoffing tongue was prayerful,
And the blinded eyes found sight,
And hearts, as flint aforetime,
Grew soft in his warmth and light.

1880.

BY THEIR WORKS.

Call him not heretic whose works attest
His faith in goodness by no creed confessed.
Whatever in love's name is truly done
To free the bound and lift the fallen one
Is done to Christ. Whoso in deed and word
Is not against Him labors for our Lord.
When He, who, sad and weary, longing sore
For love's sweet service, sought the sisters' door,
One saw the heavenly, one the human guest,
But who shall say which loved the Master best?

1881.

THE WORD.

Voice of the Holy Spirit, making known
Man to himself, a witness swift and sure,
Warning, approving, true and wise and pure,
Counsel and guidance that misleadeth none!
By thee the mystery of life is read;
The picture-writing of the world's gray seers,
The myths and parables of the primal years,
Whose letter kills, by thee interpreted
Take healthful meanings fitted to our needs,
And in the soul's vernacular express
The common law of simple righteousness.
Hatred of cant and doubt of human creeds
May well be felt: the unpardonable sin
Is to deny the Word of God within!

1881.

THE BOOK.

Gallery of sacred pictures manifold,
A minster rich in holy effigies,
And bearing on entablature and frieze
The hieroglyphic oracles of old.
Along its transept aureoled martyrs sit;
And the low chancel side-lights half acquaint
The eye with shrines of prophet, bard, and saint,
Their age-dimmed tablets traced in doubtful writ!
But only when on form and word obscure
Falls from above the white supernal light
We read the mystic characters aright,
And life informs the silent portraiture,
Until we pause at last, awe-held, before
The One ineffable Face, love, wonder, and adore.

1881.

REQUIREMENT.

We live by Faith; but Faith is not the slave
Of text and legend. Reason's voice and God's,
Nature's and Duty's, never are at odds.
What asks our Father of His children, save
Justice and mercy and humility,
A reasonable service of good deeds,
Pure living, tenderness to human needs,
Reverence and trust, and prayer for light to see
The Master's footprints in our daily ways?
No knotted scourge nor sacrificial knife,
But the calm beauty of an ordered life
Whose very breathing is unworded praise!—
A life that stands as all true lives have stood,
Firm-rooted in the faith that God is Good.

1881.

HELP.

Dream not, O Soul, that easy is the task
Thus set before thee. If it proves at length
As well it may, beyond thy natural strength,
Faint not, despair not. As a child may ask
A father, pray the Everlasting Good
For light and guidance midst the subtle snares
Of sin thick planted in life's thoroughfares,
For spiritual strength and moral hardihood;
Still listening, through the noise of time and sense,
To the still whisper of the Inward Word;
Bitter in blame, sweet in approval heard,
Itself its own confirming evidence:
To health of soul a voice to cheer and please,
To guilt the wrath of the Eumenides.

1881.

UTTERANCE.

But what avail inadequate words to reach
The innermost of Truth? Who shall essay,
Blinded and weak, to point and lead the way,
Or solve the mystery in familiar speech?
Yet, if it be that something not thy own,
Some shadow of the Thought to which our schemes,
Creeds, cult, and ritual are at best but dreams,
Is even to thy unworthiness made known,
Thou mayst not hide what yet thou shouldst not dare
To utter lightly, lest on lips of thine
The real seem false, the beauty undivine.
So, weighing duty in the scale of prayer,
Give what seems given thee. It may prove a seed
Of goodness dropped in fallow-grounds of need.

1881.

ORIENTAL MAXIMS.

PARAPHRASE OF SANSCRIT TRANSLATIONS.

THE INWARD JUDGE.

From *Institutes of Manu.*

The soul itself its awful witness is.
Say not in evil doing, 'No one sees,'
And so offend the conscious One within,
Whose ear can hear the silences of sin
Ere they find voice, whose eyes unsleeping see
The secret motions of iniquity.

Nor in thy folly say, 'I am alone.'
For, seated in thy heart, as on a throne,
The ancient Judge and Witness liveth still,
To note thy act and thought; and as thy ill
Or good goes from thee, far beyond thy reach,
The solemn Doomsman's seal is set on each.

1878.

LAYING UP TREASURE.

From the *Mahâbhârata.*

Before the Ender comes, whose charioteer
Is swift or slow Disease, lay up each year
Thy harvests of well-doing, wealth that kings
Nor thieves can take away. When all the things
Thou callest thine, goods, pleasures, honors fall,
Thou in thy virtue shalt survive them all.

1881.

CONDUCT.

From the *Mahâbhârata.*

Heed how thou livest. Do no act by day
Which from the night shall drive thy peace away.
In months of sun so live that months of rain
Shall still be happy. Evermore restrain
Evil and cherish good, so shall there be
Another and a happier life for thee.

1881.

AN EASTER FLOWER GIFT.

O dearest bloom the seasons know,
Flowers of the Resurrection, blow,
Our hope and faith restore;
And through the bitterness of death
And loss and sorrow, breathe a breath
Of life forevermore!

The thought of Love Immortal blends
With fond remembrances of friends;
In you, O sacred flowers,
By human love made doubly sweet,
The heavenly and the earthly meet,
The heart of Christ and ours!

1882.

THE MYSTIC'S CHRISTMAS.

'All hail!' the bells of Christmas rang,
'All hail!' the monks at Christmas sang,
The merry monks who kept with cheer
The gladdest day of all their year.

But still apart, unmoved thereat,
A pious elder brother sat
Silent, in his accustomed place,
With God's sweet peace upon his face.

'Why sitt'st thou thus?' his brethren cried.
'It is the blessed Christmas-tide;
The Christmas lights are all aglow,
The sacred lilies bud and blow.

'Above our heads the joy-bells ring,
Without the happy children sing,
And all God's creatures hail the morn
On which the holy Christ was born!

'Rejoice with us; no more rebuke
Our gladness with thy quiet look.'
The gray monk answered: 'Keep, I pray,
Even as ye list, the Lord's birthday.

'Let heathen Yule fires flicker red
Where thronged refectory feasts are spread;
With mystery-play and masque and mime
And wait-songs speed the holy time!

'The blindest faith may haply save;
The Lord accepts the things we have;
And reverence, howsoe'er it strays,
May find at last the shining ways.

'They needs must grope who cannot see,
The blade before the ear must be;
As ye are feeling I have felt,
And where ye dwell I too have dwelt.

'But now, beyond the things of sense,
Beyond occasions and events,
I know, through God's exceeding grace,
Release from form and time and place.

'I listen, from no mortal tongue,
To hear the song the angels sung;
And wait within myself to know
The Christmas lilies bud and blow.

'The outward symbols disappear
From him whose inward sight is clear;
And small must be the choice of days
To him who fills them all with praise!

'Keep while you need it, brothers mine,
With honest zeal your Christmas sign,
But judge not him who every morn
Feels in his heart the Lord Christ born!'

1882.

AT LAST.

[Recited by one of the little group of relations, who stood by the poet's bedside, as the last moment of his life approached.]

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay!

Be near me when all else is from me drifting;
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, my Father! let Thy spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,

And flows forever through heaven's green expansions
The river of Thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

1882.

WHAT THE TRAVELLER SAID AT SUNSET.

THE shadows grow and deepen round me,
I feel the dew-fall in the air;
The muezzin of the darkening thicket,
I hear the night-thrush call to prayer.

The evening wind is sad with farewells,
And loving hands unclasp from mine;
Alone I go to meet the darkness
Across an awful boundary-line.

As from the lighted hearths behind me
I pass with slow, reluctant feet,
What waits me in the land of strangeness?
What face shall smile, what voice shall greet?

What space shall awe, what brightness blind me?
What thunder-roll of music stun?
What vast processions sweep before me
Of shapes unknown beneath the sun?

I shrink from unaccustomed glory,
I dread the myriad-voicëd strain;
Give me the unforgotten faces,
And let my lost ones speak again.

He will not chide my mortal yearning
Who is our Brother and our Friend;
In whose full life, divine and human,
The heavenly and the earthly blend.

Mine be the joy of soul-communion,
The sense of spiritual strength renewed,
The reverence for the pure and holy,
The dear delight of doing good.

No fitting ear is mine to listen
An endless anthem's rise and fall;
No curious eye is mine to measure
The pearl gate and the jasper wall.

For love must needs be more than knowledge:
What matter if I never know
Why Aldebaran's star is ruddy,
Or warmer Sirius white as snow!

Forgive my human words, O Father!
I go Thy larger truth to prove;
Thy mercy shall transcend my longing:
I seek but love, and Thou art Love!

I go to find my lost and mourned for
Safe in Thy sheltering goodness still,
And all that hope and faith foreshadow
Made perfect in Thy holy will!

1883.

'THE STORY OF IDA.'

Francesca Alexander, whose pen and pencil have so reverently transcribed the simple faith and life of the Italian peasantry, wrote the narrative published with John Ruskin's introduction under the title, *The Story of Ida.*

WEARY of jangling noises never stilled,
The skeptic's sneer, the bigot's hate, the din
Of clashing texts, the webs of creed men spin
Round simple truth, the children grown who build
With gilded cards their new Jerusalem,
Busy, with sacerdotal tailorings
And tinsel gauds, bedizening holy things,
I turn, with glad and grateful heart, from them
To the sweet story of the Florentine
Immortal in her blameless maidenhood,
Beautiful as God's angels and as good;
Feeling that life, even now, may be divine
With love no wrong can ever change to hate,
No sin make less than all-compassionate!

1884.

THE LIGHT THAT IS FELT.[77]

A TENDER child of summers three,
Seeking her little bed at night,
Paused on the dark stair timidly.
'Oh, mother! Take my hand,' said she,
'And then the dark will all be light.'

We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before;
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore.

Reach downward to the sunless days
Wherein our guides are blind as we
And faith is small and hope delays;
Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of Thee!

1884.

THE TWO LOVES.

SMOOTHING soft the nestling head
Of a maiden fancy-led,
Thus a grave-eyed woman said:

'Richest gifts are those we make,
Dearer than the love we take
That we give for love's own sake.

'Well I know the heart's unrest;
Mine has been the common quest,
To be loved and therefore blest.

'Favors undeserved were mine;
At my feet as on a shrine
Love has laid its gifts divine.

'Sweet the offerings seemed, and yet
With their sweetness came regret,
And a sense of unpaid debt.

'Heart of mine unsatisfied,
Was it vanity or pride
That a deeper joy denied?

'Hands that ope but to receive
Empty close; they only live
Richly who can richly give.

'Still,' she sighed, with moistening eyes,
'Love is sweet in any guise;
But its best is sacrifice!

'He who, giving, does not crave
Likest is to Him who gave
Life itself the loved to save.

'Love, that self-forgetful gives,
Sows surprise of ripened sheaves,
Late or soon its own receives.'

1884.

ADJUSTMENT.

THE tree of Faith its bare, dry boughs must shed
That nearer heaven the living ones may climb;
The false must fail, though from our shores of time
The old lament be heard, 'Great Pan is dead!'
That wail is Error's, from his high place hurled;
This sharp recoil is Evil undertrod;
Our time's unrest, an angel sent of God
Troubling with life the waters of the world.
Even as they list the winds of the Spirit blow
To turn or break our century-rusted vanes;
Sands shift and waste; the rock alone remains
Where, led of Heaven, the strong tides come and go,
And storm-clouds, rent by thunderbolt and wind,
Leave, free of mist, the permanent stars behind.

Therefore I trust, although to outward sense
Both true and false seem shaken; I will hold
With newer light my reverence for the old,
And calmly wait the births of Providence.
No gain is lost; the clear-eyed saints look down

Untroubled on the wreck of schemes and creeds;
Love yet remains, its rosary of good deeds
Counting in task-field and o'erpeopled town.
Truth has charmed life; the Inward Word survives,
And, day by day, its revelation brings;
Faith, hope, and charity, whatsoever things
Which cannot be shaken, stand. Still holy lives
Reveal the Christ of whom the letter told,
And the new gospel verifies the old.

1885.

HYMNS OF THE BRAHMO SOMAJ.

I have attempted this paraphrase of the Hymns of the Brahmo Somaj of India, as I find them in Mozoomdar's account of the devotional exercises of that remarkable religious development which has attracted far less attention and sympathy from the Christian world than it deserves, as a fresh revelation of the direct action of the Divine Spirit upon the human heart.

I.

THE mercy, O Eternal One!
By man unmeasured yet,
In joy or grief, in shade or sun,
I never will forget.
I give the whole, and not a part,
Of all Thou gavest me;
My goods, my life, my soul and heart,
I yield them all to Thee!

II.

We fast and plead, we weep and pray,
From morning until even;
We feel to find the holy way,
We knock at the gate of heaven!
And when in silent awe we wait,
And word and sign forbear,
The hinges of the golden gate
Move, soundless, to our prayer!
Who hears the eternal harmonies
Can heed no outward word;
Blind to all else is he who sees
The vision of the Lord!

III.

O soul, be patient, restrain thy tears,
Have hope, and not despair;
As a tender mother heareth her child
God hears the penitent prayer.
And not forever shall grief be thine;
On the Heavenly Mother's breast,
Washed clean and white in waters of joy
Shall His seeking child find rest.
Console thyself with His word of grace,
And cease thy wail of woe,
For His mercy never an equal hath,
And His love no bounds can know.
Lean close unto Him in faith and hope;
How many like thee have found
In Him a shelter and home of peace,
By His mercy compassed round!
There, safe from sin and the sorrow it brings,
They sing their grateful psalms,
And rest, at noon, by the wells of God,
In the shade of His holy palms!

1885.

REVELATION.

'And I went into the Vale of Beavor, and as I went I preached repentance to the people. And one morning sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me, and a temptation beset me. And it was said: *All things come by Nature;* and the Elements and the Stars came over me. And as I sat still and let it alone, a living hope arose in me, and a true Voice which said: *There is a living God who made all things.* And immediately the cloud and the temptation vanished, and Life rose over all, and my heart was glad and I praised the living God.'—*Journal of George Fox*, 1690.

STILL, as of old, in Beavor's Vale,
O man of God! our hope and faith
The Elements and Stars assail,
And the awed spirit holds its breath,
Blown over by a wind of death.

Takes Nature thought for such as we,
What place her human atom fills,
The weed-drift of her careless sea,
The mist on her unheeding hills?
What recks she of our helpless wills?

Strange god of Force, with fear, not love,
Its trembling worshipper! Can prayer
Reach the shut ear of Fate, or move
Unpitying Energy to spare?
What doth the cosmic Vastness care?

In vain to this dread Unconcern
For the All-Father's love we look;
In vain, in quest of it, we turn
The storied leaves of Nature's book,
The prints her rocky tablets took.

I pray for faith, I long to trust;
I listen with my heart, and hear
A Voice without a sound: 'Be just,
Be true, be merciful, revere
The Word within thee: God is near!

'A light to sky and earth unknown
Pales all their lights: a mightier force
Than theirs the powers of Nature own,
And, to its goal as at its source,
His Spirit moves the Universe.

'Believe and trust. Through stars and suns,
Through life and death, through soul and sense,
His wise, paternal purpose runs;
The darkness of His providence
Is star-lit with benign intents.'

O joy supreme! I know the Voice,
Like none beside on earth or sea;
Yea, more, O soul of mine, rejoice,
By all that He requires of me,
I know what God Himself must be.

No picture to my aid I call,
I shape no image in my prayer;
I only know in Him is all
Of life, light, beauty, everywhere,
Eternal Goodness here and there!

I know He is, and what He is,
Whose one great purpose is the good
Of all. I rest my soul on His
Immortal Love and Fatherhood;
And trust Him, as His children should.

I fear no more. The clouded face
Of Nature smiles; through all her things
Of time and space and sense I trace
The moving of the Spirit's wings,
And hear the song of hope she sings.

1886.

At Sundown

TO E. C. S.

POET and friend of poets, if thy glass
Detects no flower in winter's tuft of grass,
Let this slight token of the debt I owe
Outlive for thee December's frozen day,
And, like the arbutus budding under snow,
Take bloom and fragrance from some morn of May
When he who gives it shall have gone the way
Where faith shall see and reverent trust shall know.

1890.

THE CHRISTMAS OF 1888.

Low in the east, against a white, cold dawn,
The black-lined silhouette of the woods was drawn,
And on a wintry waste
Of frosted streams and hillsides bare and brown,
Through thin cloud-films a pallid ghost looked down,
The waning moon half-faced!

In that pale sky and sere, snow-waiting earth,
What sign was there of the immortal birth?
What herald of the One?
Lo! swift as thought the heavenly radiance came,
A rose-red splendor swept the sky like flame,
Up rolled the round, bright sun!

And all was changed. From a transfigured world
The moon's ghost fled, the smoke of home-hearths curled
Up the still air unblown.
In Orient warmth and brightness, did that morn
O'er Nain and Nazareth, when the Christ was born,
Break fairer than our own?

The morning's promise noon and eve fulfilled
In warm, soft sky and landscape hazy-hilled
And sunset fair as they;
A sweet reminder of His holiest time,
A summer-miracle in our winter clime,
God gave a perfect day.

The near was blended with the old and far,
And Bethlehem's hillside and the Magi's star
Seemed here, as there and then,—
Our homestead pine-tree was the Syrian palm,
Our heart's desire the angels' midnight psalm,
Peace, and good-will to men!

1888.

THE VOW OF WASHINGTON.

Read in New York, April 30, 1889, at the Centennial Celebration of the Inauguration of George Washington as the first President of the United States.

THE sword was sheathed: in April's sun
Lay green the fields by Freedom won;

And severed sections, weary of debates,
Joined hands at last and were United States.

O City sitting by the Sea!
How proud the day that dawned on thee,
When the new era, long desired, began,
And, in its need, the hour had found the man!

One thought the cannon salvos spoke,
The resonant bell-tower's vibrant stroke,
The voiceful streets, the plaudit-echoing halls,
And prayer and hymn borne heavenward from St. Paul's!

How felt the land in every part
The strong throb of a nation's heart,
As its great leader gave, with reverent awe,
His pledge to Union, Liberty, and Law!

That pledge the heavens above him heard,
That vow the sleep of centuries stirred;
In world-wide wonder listening peoples bent
Their gaze on Freedom's great experiment.

Could it succeed? Of honor sold
And hopes deceived all history told.
Above the wrecks that strewed the mournful past,
Was the long dream of ages true at last?

Thank God! the people's choice was just,
The one man equal to his trust,
Wise beyond lore, and without weakness good,
Calm in the strength of flawless rectitude!

His rule of justice, order, peace,
Made possible the world's release;
Taught prince and serf that power is but a trust,
And rule alone, which serves the ruled, is just;

That Freedom generous is, but strong
In hate of fraud and selfish wrong,
Pretence that turns her holy truth to lies,
And lawless license masking in her guise.

Land of his love! with one glad voice
Let thy great sisterhood rejoice;
A century's suns o'er thee have risen and set,
And, God be praised, we are one nation yet.

And still we trust the years to be
Shall prove his hope was destiny,
Leaving our flag, with all its added stars,
Unrent by faction and unstained by wars.

Lo! where with patient toil he nursed
And trained the new-set plant at first,
The widening branches of a stately tree
Stretch from the sunrise to the sunset sea.

And in its broad and sheltering shade,
Sitting with none to make afraid,
Were we now silent, through each mighty limb,
The winds of heaven would sing the praise of him.

Our first and best!—his ashes lie
Beneath his own Virginian sky.
Forgive, forget, O true and just and brave,
The storm that swept above thy sacred grave!

For, ever in the awful strife
And dark hours of the nation's life,
Through the fierce tumult pierced his warning word,
Their father's voice his erring children heard!

The change for which he prayed and sought
In that sharp agony was wrought;
No partial interest draws its alien line
'Twixt North and South, the cypress and the pine!

One people now, all doubt beyond,
His name shall be our Union-bond;
We lift our hands to Heaven, and here and now
Take on our lips the old Centennial vow.

For rule and trust must needs be ours;
Chooser and chosen both are powers
Equal in service as in rights; the claim
Of Duty rests on each and all the same.

Then let the sovereign millions, where
Our banner floats in sun and air,
From the warm palm-lands to Alaska's cold,
Repeat with us the pledge a century old!

1889.

THE CAPTAIN'S WELL.

The story of the shipwreck of Captain Valentine Bagley, on the coast of Arabia, and his sufferings in the desert, has been familiar from my childhood. It has been partially told in the singularly beautiful lines of my friend, Harriet Prescott Spofford, on the occasion of a public celebration at the Newburyport Library. To the charm and felicity of her verse, as far as it goes, nothing can be added; but in the following ballad I have endeavored to give a fuller detail of the touching incident upon which it is founded.

FROM pain and peril, by land and main,
The shipwrecked sailor came back again;

And like one from the dead, the threshold crossed
Of his wondering home, that had mourned him lost,

Where he sat once more with his kith and kin,
And welcomed his neighbors thronging in.

But when morning came he called for his spade.
'I must pay my debt to the Lord,' he said.

'Why dig you here?' asked the passer-by;
'Is there gold or silver the road so nigh?'

'No, friend,' he answered: 'but under this sod
Is the blessed water, the wine of God.'

'Water! the Powow is at your back,
And right before you the Merrimac,

'And look you up, or look you down,
There's a well-sweep at every door in town.'

'True,' he said, 'we have wells of our own;
But this I dig for the Lord alone.'

Said the other: 'This soil is dry, you know,
I doubt if a spring can be found below;

'You had better consult, before you dig,
Some water-witch, with a hazel twig.'

'No, wet or dry, I will dig it here,
Shallow or deep, if it takes a year.

'In the Arab desert, where shade is none,
The waterless land of sand and sun,

'Under the pitiless, brazen sky
My burning throat as the sand was dry;

'My crazed brain listened in fever dreams
For plash of buckets and ripple of streams;

'And opening my eyes to the blinding glare,
And my lips to the breath of the blistering air,

'Tortured alike by the heavens and earth,
I cursed, like Job, the day of my birth.

'Then something tender, and sad, and mild
As a mother's voice to her wandering child,

'Rebuked my frenzy; and bowing my head,
I prayed as I never before had prayed:

'Pity me, God! for I die of thirst;
Take me out of this land accurst;

'And if ever I reach my home again,
Where earth has springs, and the sky has rain,

'I will dig a well for the passers-by,
And none shall suffer from thirst as I.

'I saw, as I prayed, my home once more,
The house, the barn, the elms by the door,

'The grass-lined road, that riverward wound,
The tall slate stones of the burying-ground,

'The belfry and steeple on meeting-house hill,
The brook with its dam, and gray grist mill,

'And I knew in that vision beyond the sea,
The very place where my well must be.

'God heard my prayer in that evil day;
He led my feet in their homeward way,

'From false mirage and dried-up well,
And the hot sand storms of a land of hell,

'Till I saw at last through the coast-hill's gap,
A city held in its stony lap,

'The mosques and the domes of scorched Muscat,
And my heart leaped up with joy thereat;

'For there was a ship at anchor lying,
A Christian flag at its mast-head flying,

'And sweetest of sounds to my homesick ear
Was my native tongue in the sailor's cheer.

'Now the Lord be thanked, I am back again,
Where earth has springs, and the skies have rain,

'And the well I promised by Oman's Sea,
I am digging for Him in Amesbury.'

His kindred wept, and his neighbors said:
'The poor old captain is out of his head.'

But from morn to noon, and from noon to night,
He toiled at his task with main and might;

And when at last, from the loosened earth,
Under his spade the stream gushed forth,

And fast as he climbed to his deep well's brim,
The water he dug for followed him,

He shouted for joy: 'I have kept my word,
And here is the well I promised the Lord!'

The long years came and the long years went,
And he sat by his roadside well content;

He watched the travellers, heat-oppressed,
Pause by the way to drink and rest,

And the sweltering horses dip, as they drank,
Their nostrils deep in the cool, sweet tank,

And grateful at heart, his memory went
Back to that waterless Orient,

And the blessed answer of prayer, which came
To the earth of iron and sky of flame.

And when a wayfarer weary and hot,
Kept to the mid road, pausing not

For the well's refreshing, he shook his head;
'He don't know the value of water,' he said;

'Had he prayed for a drop, as I have done,
In the desert circle of sand and sun,

'He would drink and rest, and go home to tell
That God's best gift is the wayside well!'

1890.

AN OUTDOOR RECEPTION.

The substance of these lines, hastily pencilled several years ago, I find among such of my unprinted scraps as have escaped the waste-basket and the fire. In transcribing it I have made some changes, additions, and omissions.

On these green banks, where falls too soon
The shade of Autumn's afternoon,
The south wind blowing soft and sweet,
The water gliding at my feet,
The distant northern range uplit
By the slant sunshine over it,
With changes of the mountain mist
From tender blush to amethyst,
The valley's stretch of shade and gleam
Fair as in Mirza's Bagdad dream,

With glad young faces smiling near
And merry voices in my ear,
I sit, methinks, as Hafiz might
In Iran's Garden of Delight.
For Persian roses blushing red,
Aster and gentian bloom instead;
For Shiraz wine, this mountain air;
For feast, the blueberries which I share
With one who proffers with stained hands
Her gleanings from yon pasture lands,
Wild fruit that art and culture spoil,
The harvest of an untilled soil;
And with her one whose tender eyes
Reflect the change of April skies,
Midway 'twixt child and maiden yet,
Fresh as Spring's earliest violet;
And one whose look and voice and ways
Make where she goes idyllic days;
And one whose sweet, still countenance
Seems dreamful of a child's romance;
And others, welcome as are these,
Like and unlike, varieties
Of pearls on nature's chaplet strung,
And all are fair, for all are young.
Gathered from seaside cities old,
From midland prairie, lake, and wold,
From the great wheat-fields, which might feed
The hunger of a world at need,
In healthful change of rest and play
Their school-vacations glide away.
No critics these: they only see
An old and kindly friend in me,
In whose amused, indulgent look
Their innocent mirth has no rebuke.
They scarce can know my rugged rhymes,
The harsher songs of evil times,
Nor graver themes in minor keys
Of life's and death's solemnities;
But haply, as they bear in mind
Some verse of lighter, happier kind,—
Hints of the boyhood of the man,
Youth viewed from life's meridian,
Half seriously and half in play
My pleasant interviewers pay
Their visit, with no fell intent
Of taking notes and punishment.

As yonder solitary pine
Is ringed below with flower and vine,
More favored than that lonely tree,
The bloom of girlhood circles me.
In such an atmosphere of youth
I half forget my age's truth;
The shadow of my life's long date
Runs backward on the dial-plate,
Until it seems a step might span
The gulf between the boy and man.

My young friends smile, as if some jay
On bleak December's leafless spray
Essayed to sing the songs of May.
Well, let them smile, and live to know,
When their brown locks are flecked with snow,
'T is tedious to be always sage
And pose the dignity of age,
While so much of our early lives
On memory's playground still survives,
And owns, as at the present hour,
The spell of youth's magnetic power.

But though I feel, with Solomon,
'T is pleasant to behold the sun,
I would not if I could repeat
A life which still is good and sweet;
I keep in age, as in my prime,
A not uncheerful step with time,
And, grateful for all blessings sent,
I go the common way, content
To make no new experiment.
On easy terms with law and fate,
For what must be I calmly wait,
And trust the path I cannot see,—
That God is good sufficeth me.
And when at last on life's strange play
The curtain falls, I only pray
That hope may lose itself in truth,
And age in Heaven's immortal youth,
And all our loves and longing prove
The foretaste of diviner love!

The day is done. Its afterglow
Along the west is burning low.
My visitors, like birds, have flown;
I hear their voices, fainter grown,
And dimly through the dusk I see
Their kerchiefs wave good-night to me,—
Light hearts of girlhood, knowing naught
Of all the cheer their coming brought;

And, in their going, unaware
Of silent-following feet of prayer:
Heaven make their budding promise good
With flowers of gracious womanhood!

1892.

R. S. S., AT DEER ISLAND ON THE MERRIMAC.

Make, for he loved thee well, our Merrimac,
From wave and shore a low and long lament
For him whose last look sought thee, as he went
The unknown way from which no step comes back.
And ye, O ancient pine-trees, at whose feet
He watched in life the sunset's reddening glow,
Let the soft south wind through your needles blow
A fitting requiem tenderly and sweet!
No fonder lover of all lovely things
Shall walk where once he walked, no smile more glad
Greet friends than his who friends in all men had,
Whose pleasant memory to that Island clings,
Where a dear mourner in the home he left
Of love's sweet solace cannot be bereft.

1890.

BURNING DRIFT-WOOD.

Before my drift-wood fire I sit,
And see, with every waif I burn,
Old dreams and fancies coloring it,
And folly's unlaid ghosts return.

O ships of mine, whose swift keels cleft
The enchanted sea on which they sailed,
Are these poor fragments only left
Of vain desires and hopes that failed?

Did I not watch from them the light
Of sunset on my towers in Spain,
And see, far off, uploom in sight
The Fortunate Isles I might not gain?

Did sudden lift of fog reveal
Arcadia's vales of song and spring,
And did I pass, with grazing keel,
The rocks whereon the sirens sing?

Have I not drifted hard upon
The unmapped regions lost to man,
The cloud-pitched tents of Prester John,
The palace domes of Kubla Khan?

Did land winds blow from jasmine flowers,
Where Youth the ageless Fountain fills?
Did Love make sign from rose blown bowers,
And gold from Eldorado's hills?

Alas! the gallant ships, that sailed
On blind Adventure's errand sent,
Howe'er they laid their courses, failed
To reach the haven of Content.

And of my ventures, those alone
Which Love had freighted, safely sped,
Seeking a good beyond my own,
By clear-eyed Duty piloted.

O mariners, hoping still to meet
The luck Arabian voyagers met,
And find in Bagdad's moonlit street,
Haroun al Raschid walking yet,

Take with you, on your Sea of Dreams,
The fair, fond fancies dear to youth.
I turn from all that only seems,
And seek the sober grounds of truth.

What matter that it is not May,
That birds have flown, and trees are bare,
That darker grows the shortening day,
And colder blows the wintry air!

The wrecks of passion and desire,
The castles I no more rebuild,
May fitly feed my drift-wood fire,
And warm the hands that age has chilled.

Whatever perished with my ships,
I only know the best remains;
A song of praise is on my lips
For losses which are now my gains.

Heap high my hearth ! No worth is lost ;
No wisdom with the folly dies.
Burn on, poor shreds, your holocaust
Shall be my evening sacrifice !

Far more than all I dared to dream,
Unsought before my door I see ;
On wings of fire and steeds of steam
The world's great wonders come to me,

And holier signs, unmarked before,
Of Love to seek and Power to save,—
The righting of the wronged and poor,
The man evolving from the slave ;

And life, no longer chance or fate,
Safe in the gracious Fatherhood.
I fold o'er-wearied hands and wait,
In full assurance of the good.

And well the waiting time must be,
Though brief or long its granted days,
If Faith and Hope and Charity
Sit by my evening hearth-fire's blaze.

And with them, friends whom Heaven has spared,
Whose love my heart has comforted,
And, sharing all my joys, has shared
My tender memories of the dead,—

Dear souls who left us lonely here,
Bound on their last, long voyage, to whom
We, day by day, are drawing near,
Where every bark has sailing room.

I know the solemn monotone
Of waters calling unto me ;
I know from whence the airs have blown
That whisper of the Eternal Sea.

As low my fires of drift-wood burn,
I hear that sea's deep sounds increase,
And, fair in sunset light, discern
Its mirage-lifted Isles of Peace.

1890.

O. W. HOLMES ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

Climbing a path which leads back never more
We heard behind his footsteps and his cheer ;
Now, face to face, we greet him standing here
Upon the lonely summit of Fourscore !
Welcome to us, o'er whom the lengthened day
Is closing and the shadows colder grow,
His genial presence, like an afterglow,
Following the one just vanishing away.
Long be it ere the table shall be set
For the last breakfast of the Autocrat,
And love repeat with smiles and tears thereat
His own sweet songs that time shall not forget.
Waiting with us the call to come up higher,
Life is not less, the heavens are only nigher !

1889.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

From purest wells of English undefiled
None deeper drank than he, the New World's child,
Who in the language of their farm-fields spoke
The wit and wisdom of New England folk,
Shaming a monstrous wrong. The world-wide laugh
Provoked thereby might well have shaken half
The walls of Slavery down, ere yet the ball
And mine of battle overthrew them all.

1891.

HAVERHILL.

1640–1890.

Read at the Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the City, July 2, 1890.

O river winding to the sea !
We call the old time back to thee ;
From forest paths and water-ways
The century-woven veil we raise.

The voices of to-day are dumb,
Unheard its sounds that go and come ;
We listen, through long-lapsing years,
To footsteps of the pioneers.

Gone steepled town and cultured plain,
The wilderness returns again,
The drear, untrodden solitude,
The gloom and mystery of the wood!

Once more the bear and panther prowl,
The wolf repeats his hungry howl,
And, peering through his leafy screen,
The Indian's copper face is seen.

We see, their rude-built huts beside,
Grave men and women anxious-eyed,
And wistful youth remembering still
Dear homes in England's Haverhill.

We summon forth to mortal view
Dark Passaquo and Saggahew,—
Wild chiefs, who owned the mighty sway
Of wizard Passaconaway.

Weird memories of the border town,
By old tradition handed down,
In chance and change before us pass
Like pictures in a magic glass,—

The terror of the midnight raid,
The death-concealing ambuscade,
The winter march, through deserts wild,
Of captive mother, wife, and child.

Ah! bleeding hands alone subdued
And tamed the savage habitude
Of forests hiding beasts of prey,
And human shapes as fierce as they.

Slow from the plough the woods with-
drew,
Slowly each year the corn-lands grew;
Nor fire, nor frost, nor foe could kill
The Saxon energy of will.

And never in the hamlet's bound
Was lack of sturdy manhood found,
And never failed the kindred good
Of brave and helpful womanhood.

That hamlet now a city is,
Its log-built huts are palaces;
The wood-path of the settler's cow
Is Traffic's crowded highway now.

And far and wide it stretches still,
Along its southward sloping hill,
And overlooks on either hand
A rich and many-watered land.

And, gladdening all the landscape, fair
As Pison was to Eden's pair,
Our river to its valley brings
The blessing of its mountain springs.

And Nature holds with narrowing space,
From mart and crowd, her old-time grace,
And guards with fondly jealous arms
The wild growths of outlying farms.

Her sunsets on Kenoza fall,
Her autumn leaves by Saltonstall;
No lavished gold can richer make
Her opulence of hill and lake.

Wise was the choice which led our sires
To kindle here their household fires,
And share the large content of all
Whose lines in pleasant places fall.

More dear, as years on years advance,
We prize the old inheritance,
And feel, as far and wide we roam,
That all we seek we leave at home.

Our palms are pines, our oranges
Are apples on our orchard trees;
Our thrushes are our nightingales,
Our larks the blackbirds of our vales.

No incense which the Orient burns
Is sweeter than our hillside ferns;
What tropic splendor can outvie
Our autumn woods, our sunset sky?

If, where the slow years came and went,
And left not affluence, but content,
Now flashes in our dazzled eyes
The electric light of enterprise;

And if the old idyllic ease
Seems lost in keen activities,
And crowded workshops now replace
The hearth's and farm-field's rustic grace;

No dull, mechanic round of toil
Life's morning charm can quite despoil;
And youth and beauty, hand in hand,
Will always find enchanted land.

No task is ill where hand and brain
And skill and strength have equal gain,
And each shall each in honor hold,
And simple manhood outweigh gold.

Earth shall be near to Heaven when all
That severs man from man shall fall,
For, here or there, salvation's plan
Alone is love of God and man.

O dwellers by the Merrimac,
The heirs of centuries at your back,
Still reaping where you have not sown,
A broader field is now your own.

Hold fast your Puritan heritage,
But let the free thought of the age
Its light and hope and sweetness add
To the stern faith the fathers had.

Adrift on Time's returnless tide,
As waves that follow waves, we glide.
God grant we leave upon the shore
Some waif of good it lacked before;

Some seed, or flower, or plant of worth,
Some added beauty to the earth;
Some larger hope, some thought to make
The sad world happier for its sake.

As tenants of uncertain stay,
So may we live our little day
That only grateful hearts shall fill
The homes we leave in Haverhill.

The singer of a farewell rhyme,
Upon whose outmost verge of time
The shades of night are falling down,
I pray, God bless the good old town!

TO G. G.

AN AUTOGRAPH.

The daughter of Daniel Gurteen, Esq., delegate from Haverhill, England, to the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary celebration of Haverhill, Massachusetts. The Rev. John Ward of the former place and many of his old parishioners were the pioneer settlers of the new town on the Merrimac.

GRACEFUL in name and in thyself, our river
None fairer saw in John Ward's pilgrim flock,
Proof that upon their century-rooted stock
The English roses bloom as fresh as ever.

Take the warm welcome of new friends with thee,
And listening to thy home's familiar chime
Dream that thou hearest, with it keeping time,
The bells on Merrimac sound across the sea.

Think of our thrushes, when the lark sings clear,
Of our sweet Mayflowers when the daisies bloom;
And bear to our and thy ancestral home
The kindly greeting of its children here.

Say that our love survives the severing strain;
That the New England, with the Old, holds fast
The proud, fond memories of a common past;
Unbroken still the ties of blood remain!

1890.

INSCRIPTION.

For the bass-relief by Preston Powers, carved upon the huge boulder in Denver Park, Col., and representing the Last Indian and the Last Bison.

THE eagle, stooping from yon snow-blown peaks,
For the wild hunter and the bison seeks,
In the changed world below; and finds alone
Their graven semblance in the eternal stone.

1891.

LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

Inscription on her Memorial Tablet in Christ Church at Hartford, Conn.

SHE sang alone, ere womanhood had known
The gift of song which fills the air to-day:
Tender and sweet, a music all her own
May fitly linger where she knelt to pray.

1888.

MILTON.

Inscription on the Memorial Window in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, the gift of George W. Childs, of America.

THE new world honors him whose lofty plea
For England's freedom made her own more sure,
Whose song, immortal as its theme, shall be
Their common freehold while both worlds endure.

1890.

THE BIRTHDAY WREATH.

December 17, 1891.

BLOSSOM and greenness, making all
The winter birthday tropical
And the plain Quaker parlors gay,
Have gone from bracket, stand, and wall;
We saw them fade, and droop, and fall,
And laid them tenderly away.

White virgin lilies, mignonette,
Blown rose, and pink, and violet,
A breath of fragrance passing by;
Visions of beauty and decay.
Colors and shapes that could not stay,
The fairest, sweetest, first to die.

But still this rustic wreath of mine,
Of acorned oak and needled pine,
And lighter growths of forest lands,
Woven and wound with careful pains,
And tender thoughts and prayers, remains,
As when it dropped from love's dear hands.

And not unfitly garlanded,
Is he, who, country-born and bred,
Welcomes the sylvan ring which gives
A feeling of old summer days,
The wild delight of woodland ways,
The glory of the autumn leaves.

And, if the flowery meed of song
To other bards may well belong,
Be his, who from the farm-field spoke
A word for Freedom when her need
Was not of dulcimer and reed,
This Isthmian wreath of pine and oak.

THE WIND OF MARCH.

UP from the sea the wild north wind is blowing
Under the sky's gray arch;
Smiling, I watch the shaken elm-boughs, knowing
It is the wind of March.

Between the passing and the coming season,
This stormy interlude
Gives to our winter-wearied hearts a reason
For trustful gratitude.

Welcome to waiting ears its harsh forewarning
Of light and warmth to come,
The longed-for joy of Nature's Easter morning,
The earth arisen in bloom!

In the loud tumult winter's strength is breaking;
I listen to the sound,
As to a voice of resurrection, waking
To life the dead, cold ground.

Between these gusts, to the soft lapse I hearken
Of rivulets on their way;
I see these tossed and naked tree-tops darken
With the fresh leaves of May.

This roar of storm, this sky so gray and lowering
Invite the airs of Spring,
A warmer sunshine over fields of flowering,
The bluebird's song and wing.

Closely behind, the Gulf's warm breezes follow
This northern hurricane,
And, borne thereon, the bobolink and swallow
Shall visit us again.

And, in green wood-paths, in the kine-fed pasture
And by the whispering rills,
Shall flowers repeat the lesson of the Master,
Taught on His Syrian hills.

Blow, then, wild wind! thy roar shall end in singing,
Thy chill in blossoming;
Come, like Bethesda's troubling angel, bringing
The healing of the Spring.

1892.

BETWEEN THE GATES.

Between the gates of birth and death
An old and saintly pilgrim passed,
With look of one who witnesseth
The long-sought goal at last.

'O thou whose reverent feet have found
The Master's footprints in thy way
And walked thereon as holy ground,
A boon of thee I pray.

'My lack would borrow thy excess,
My feeble faith the strength of thine;
I need thy soul's white saintliness
To hide the stains of mine.

'The grace and favor else denied
May well be granted for thy sake.'
So, tempted, doubting, sorely tried,
A younger pilgrim spake.

'Thy prayer, my son, transcends my gift;
No power is mine,' the sage replied,
'The burden of a soul to lift
Or stain of sin to hide.

'Howe'er the outward life may seem,
For pardoning grace we all must pray;
No man his brother can redeem
Or a soul's ransom pay.

'Not always age is growth of good;
Its years have losses with their gain;
Against some evil youth withstood
Weak hands may strive in vain.

'With deeper voice than any speech
Of mortal lips from man to man,
What earth's unwisdom may not teach
The Spirit only can.

'Make thou that holy guide thine own,
And following where it leads the way,
The known shall lapse in the unknown
As twilight into day.

'The best of earth shall still remain,
And heaven's eternal years shall prove
That life and death, and joy and pain,
Are ministers of Love.'

1891.

THE LAST EVE OF SUMMER.

Summer's last sun nigh unto setting shines
Through yon columnar pines,
And on the deepening shadows of the lawn
Its golden lines are drawn.

Dreaming of long gone summer days like this,
Feeling the wind's soft kiss,
Grateful and glad that failing ear and sight
Have still their old delight,

I sit alone, and watch the warm, sweet day
Lapse tenderly away;
And, wistful, with a feeling of forecast,
I ask, 'Is this the last?

'Will nevermore for me the seasons run
Their round, and will the sun
Of ardent summers yet to come forget
For me to rise and set?'

Thou shouldst be here, or I should be with thee
Wherever thou mayst be,
Lips mute, hands clasped, in silences of speech
Each answering unto each.

For this still hour, this sense of mystery far
Beyond the evening star,
No words outworn suffice on lip or scroll:
The soul would fain with soul

Wait, while these few swift-passing days fulfil
The wise-disposing Will,
And, in the evening as at morning, trust
The All-Merciful and Just.

The solemn joy that soul-communion feels
Immortal life reveals;
And human love, its prophecy and sign,
Interprets love divine.

Come then, in thought, if that alone may be,
O friend! and bring with thee
Thy calm assurance of transcendent Spheres
And the Eternal Years!

1890.

TO OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

8th Mo. 29th, 1892.

[This, the last of Mr. Whittier's poems, was written but a few weeks before his death.]

Among the thousands who with hail and cheer
Will welcome thy new year,
How few of all have passed, as thou and I,
So many milestones by!

We have grown old together; we have seen,
Our youth and age between,
Two generations leave us, and to-day
We with the third hold way,

Loving and loved. If thought must backward run
To those who, one by one,
In the great silence and the dark beyond
Vanished with farewells fond,

Unseen, not lost; our grateful memories still
Their vacant places fill,
And with the full-voiced greeting of new friends
A tenderer whisper blends.

Linked close in a pathetic brotherhood
Of mingled ill and good,
Of joy and grief, of grandeur and of shame,
For pity more than blame,—

The gift is thine the weary world to make
More cheerful for thy sake,
Soothing the ears its Miserere pains,
With the old Hellenic strains,

Lighting the sullen face of discontent
With smiles for blessing sent.
Enough of selfish wailing has been had,
Thank God! for notes more glad.

Life is indeed no holiday; therein
Are want, and woe, and sin,
Death and its nameless fears, and over all
Our pitying tears must fall.

Sorrow is real; but the counterfeit
Which folly brings to it,
We need thy wit and wisdom to resist,
O rarest Optimist!

Thy hand, old friend! the service of our days,
In differing moods and ways
May prove to those who follow in our train
Not valueless nor vain.

Far off, and faint as echoes of a dream,
The songs of boyhood seem,
Yet on our autumn boughs, unflown with spring,
The evening thrushes sing.

The hour draws near, howe'er delayed and late,
When at the Eternal Gate
We leave the words and works we call our own,
And lift void hands alone

For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that Gate no toll;
Giftless we come to Him, who all things gives,
And live because He lives.

APPENDIXES

I. Early and Uncollected Verses

I AM yielding to what seems, under the circumstances, almost a necessity, in adding to the pieces assigned for one reason or another to the limbo of an appendix, some of my very earliest attempts at verse, which have been kept alive in the newspapers for the last half century. A few of them have even been printed in book form without my consent, and greatly to my annoyance, with all their accumulated errors of the press added to their original defects and crudity. I suppose they should have died a natural death long ago, but their feline tenacity of life seems to contradict the theory of the 'survival of the fittest.' I have consented, at my publishers' request, to take the poor vagrants home and give them a more presentable appearance, in the hope that they may at least be of some interest to those who are curious enough to note the weak beginnings of the graduate of a small country district school, sixty years ago. That they met with some degree of favor at that time may be accounted for by the fact that the makers of verse were then few in number, with little competition in their unprofitable vocation, and that the standard of criticism was not discouragingly high.

The earliest of the author's verses that found their way into print were published in the Newburyport *Free Press*, edited by William Lloyd Garrison, in 1826. [The poems here collected, with the exception of the last, were written during the years 1825–1833.]

THE EXILE'S DEPARTURE.

FOND scenes, which delighted my youthful existence,
With feelings of sorrow I bid ye adieu—
A lasting adieu! for now, dim in the distance,
The shores of Hibernia recede from my view.
Farewell to the cliffs, tempest-beaten and gray,
Which guard the lov'd shores of my own native land;
Farewell to the village and sail-shadow'd bay,
The forest-crown'd hill and the water-wash'd strand.

I've fought for my country—I've brav'd all the dangers
That throng round the path of the warrior in strife;
I now must depart to a nation of strangers,
And pass in seclusion the remnant of life;
Far, far from the friends to my bosom most dear,
With none to support me in peril and pain,
And none but the stranger to drop the sad tear
On the grave where the heart-broken Exile is lain.

Friends of my youth! I must leave you forever,
And hasten to dwell in a region unknown:—
Yet time cannot change, nor the broad ocean sever,
Hearts firmly united and tried as our own.

Ah, no! though I wander, all sad and forlorn,
In a far distant land, yet shall memory trace,
When far o'er the ocean's white surges I'm borne,
The scene of past pleasures,—my own native place.

Farewell, shores of Erin, green land of my fathers:—
Once more, and forever, a mournful adieu!
For round thy dim headlands the ocean-mist gathers,
And shrouds the fair isle I no longer can view.
I go—but wherever my footsteps I bend,
For freedom and peace to my own native isle,
And contentment and joy to each warm-hearted friend
Shall be the heart's prayer of the lonely Exile!

1825.

THE DEITY.

The Prophet stood
On the high mount, and saw the tempest cloud
Pour the fierce whirlwind from its reservoir
Of congregated gloom. The mountain oak,
Torn from the earth, heaved high its roots where once
Its branches waved. The fir-tree's shapely form,
Smote by the tempest, lashed the mountain's side.
Yet, calm in conscious purity, the Seer
Beheld the awful desolation, for
The Eternal Spirit moved not in the storm.

The tempest ceased. The caverned earthquake burst
Forth from its prison, and the mountain rocked
Even to its base. The topmost crags were thrown,
With fearful crashing, down its shuddering sides.
Unawed, the Prophet saw and heard; he felt
Not in the earthquake moved the God of Heaven.
The murmur died away; and from the height,
Torn by the storm and shattered by the shock,
Rose far and clear a pyramid of flame
Mighty and vast; the startled mountain deer
Shrank from its glare, and cowered within the shade;
The wild fowl shrieked—but even then the Seer
Untrembling stood and marked the fearful glow,
For Israel's God came not within the flame!

The fiery beacon sank. A still, small voice,
Unlike to human sound, at once conveyed
Deep awe and reverence to his pious heart.
Then bowed the holy man; his face he veiled
Within his mantle—and in meekness owned
The presence of his God, discerned not in
The storm, the earthquake, or the mighty flame.

1825.

THE VALE OF THE MERRIMAC.

There are streams which are famous in history's story,
Whose names are familiar to pen and to tongue,
Renowned in the records of love and of glory,
Where knighthood has ridden and minstrels have sung:—
Fair streams thro' more populous regions are gliding,
Tower, temple, and palace their borders adorning,
With tall-masted ships on their broad bosoms riding,
Their banners stretch'd out in the breezes of morning;

And their vales may be lovely and pleasant—but never
Was skiff ever wafted, or wav'd a white sail
O'er a lovelier wave than my dear native river,
Or brighter tides roll'd than in Merrimac's vale!

And fair streams may glide where the climate is milder,
Where winter ne'er gathers and spring ever blooms,
And others may roll where the region is wilder,
Their dark waters hid in some forest's deep gloom,
Where the thunder-scath'd peaks of Helvetia are frowning,
And the Rhine's rapid waters encircle their bases,
Where the snows of long years are the hoary Alps crowning,
And the tempest-charg'd vapor their tall tops embraces:—
There sure might be fix'd, amid scenery so frightful,
The region of romance and wild fairy-tale,—
But such scenes could not be to my heart so delightful
As the home of my fathers,—fair Merrimac's vale!

There are streams where the bounty of Providence musters
The fairest of fruits by their warm sunny sides,
The vine bending low with the grape's heavy clusters,
And the orange-tree waving its fruit o'er their tides:—
But I envy not him whose lot has been cast there,
For oppression is there—and the hand of the spoiler,
Regardless of justice or mercy, has past there,
And made him a wretched and indigent toiler.

No—dearer to me are the scenes of my childhood,
The moss-cover'd bank and the breeze-wafted sail,
The age-stinted oak and the green groves of wild-wood
That wave round the borders of Merrimac's vale!

Oh, lovely the scene, when the gray misty vapor
Of morning is lifted from Merrimac's shore;
When the fire-fly, lighting his wild gleaming taper,
Thy dimly seen lowlands comes glimmering o'er;
When on thy calm surface the moonbeam falls brightly,
And the dull bird of night is his covert forsaking,
When the whippoorwill's notes from thy margin sound lightly,
And break on the sound which thy small waves are making,
O brightest of visions! my heart shall forever,
Till memory shall perish and reason shall fail,
Still preference give to my own native river,
The name of my fathers, and Merrimac's vale!

1825.

BENEVOLENCE.

Hail, heavenly gift! within the human breast,
Germ of unnumber'd virtues—by thy aid
The fainting heart, with riving grief opprest,
Survives the ruin adverse scenes have made:
Woes that have wrung the bosom, cares that preyed
Long on the spirit, are dissolv'd by thee—

Misfortune's frown, despair's disastrous shade,
Ghastly disease, and pining poverty,
Thy influence dread, and at thy approach they flee.

Thy spirit led th' immortal Howard on;
Nurtur'd by thee, on many a foreign shore
Imperishable fame, by virtue won,
Adorns his memory, tho' his course is o'er;
Thy animating smile his aspect wore,
To cheer the sorrow-desolated soul,
Compassion's balm in grief-worn hearts to pour,
And snatch the prisoner from despair's control,
Steal half his woes away, and lighter make the whole.

Green be the sod on Cherson's honor'd field,
Where wraps the turf around his mouldering clay;
There let the earth her choicest beauties yield,
And there the breeze in gentlest murmurs play;
There let the widow and the orphan stray,
To wet with tears their benefactor's tomb;
There let the rescued prisoner bend his way,
And mourn o'er him, who in the dungeon's gloom
Had sought him and averted misery's fearful doom.

His grave perfum'd with heartfelt sighs of grief,
And moistened by the tear of gratitude,—
Oh, how unlike the spot where war's grim chief
Sinks on the field, in sanguine waves imbrued!
Who mourns for him, whose footsteps can be viewed
With reverential awe imprinted near
The monument rear'd o'er the man of blood?
Or who waste on it sorrow's balmy tear?
None! shame and misery rest alone upon his bier.

Offspring of heaven! Benevolence, thy pow'r
Bade Wilberforce its mighty champion be,
And taught a Clarkson's ardent mind to soar
O'er every obstacle, when serving thee:—
Theirs was the task to set the sufferer free,
To break the bonds which bound th' unwilling slave,
To shed abroad the light of liberty,
And leave to all the rights their Maker gave,
To bid the world rejoice o'er hated slavery's grave.

Diffuse thy charms, Benevolence! let thy light
Pierce the dark clouds which ages past have thrown
Before the beams of truth—and nature's right,
Inborn, let every hardened tyrant own;
On our fair shore be thy mild presence known;
And every portion of Columbia's land
Be as God's garden with thy blessings sown;
Yea, o'er Earth's regions let thy love expand
Till all united are in friendship's sacred band!

Then in that hour of joy will be fulfilled
The prophet's heart-consoling prophecy;
Then war's commotion shall on earth be stilled,
And men their swords to other use apply;
Then Afric's injured sons no more shall try
The bitterness of slavery's toil and pain,
Nor pride nor love of gain direct the eye
Of stern oppression to their homes again;
But peace, a lasting peace, throughout the world shall reign.

1825

OCEAN.

UNFATHOMED deep, unfetter'd waste
Of never-silent waves,
Each by its rushing follower chas'd,
Through unillumin'd caves,
And o'er the rocks whose turrets rude,
E'en since the birth of time,
Have heard amid thy solitude
The billow's ceaseless chime.

O'er what recesses, depths unknown,
Dost thou thy waves impel,
Where never yet a sunbeam shone,
Or gleam of moonlight fell?
For never yet did mortal eyes
Thy gloom-wrapt deeps behold,
And naught of thy dread mysteries
The tongue of man hath told.

What, though proud man presume to hold
His course upon thy tide,
O'er thy dark billows uncontroll'd
His fragile bark to guide—
Yet who, upon thy mountain waves,
Can feel himself secure
While sweeping o'er thy yawning caves,
Deep, awful, and obscure?

But thou art mild and tranquil now—
Thy wrathful spirits sleep,
And gentle billows, calm and slow,
Across thy bosom sweep.
Yet where the dim horizon's bound
Rests on thy sparkling bed,
The tempest-cloud, in gloom profound,
Prepares its wrath to shed.

Thus, mild and calm in youth's bright hour
The tide of life appears,
When fancy paints, with magic spell,
The bliss of coming years;
But clouds will rise, and darkness bring
O'er life's deceitful way,
And cruel disappointment fling
Its shade on hope's dim ray.

1827.

THE SICILIAN VESPERS.

SILENCE o'er sea and earth
With the veil of evening fell,
Till the convent-tower sent deeply forth
The chime of its vesper bell.
One moment—and that solemn sound
Fell heavy on the ear;
But a sterner echo passed around,
And the boldest shook to hear.

The startled monks thronged up,
In the torchlight cold and dim;
And the priest let fall his incense-cup,
And the virgin hushed her hymn,
For a boding clash, and a clanging tramp,
And a summoning voice were heard,
And fretted wall, and dungeon damp,
To the fearful echo stirred.

The peasant heard the sound,
As he sat beside his hearth;
And the song and the dance were hushed around,
With the fire-side tale of mirth.
The chieftain shook in his banner'd hall,
As the sound of fear drew nigh,
And the warder shrank from the castle wall,
As the gleam of spears went by.

Woe! woe! to the stranger, then,
At the feast and flow of wine,
In the red array of mailëd men,
Or bowed at the holy shrine;
For the wakened pride of an injured land
Had burst its iron thrall,
From the plumëd chief to the pilgrim band;
Woe! woe! to the sons of Gaul!

Proud beings fell that hour,
With the young and passing fair,
And the flame went up from dome and tower,
The avenger's arm was there!
The stranger priest at the altar stood,
And clasped his beads in prayer,
But the holy shrine grew dim with blood,
The avenger found him there!

Woe! woe! to the sons of Gaul,
To the serf and mailëd lord;
They were gathered darkly, one and all,
To the harvest of the sword:
And the morning sun, with a quiet smile,
Shone out o'er hill and glen,
On ruined temple and smouldering pile,
And the ghastly forms of men.

Ay, the sunshine sweetly smiled,
As its early glance came forth,
It had no sympathy with the wild
And terrible things of earth.
And the man of blood that day might read,
In a language freely given,
How ill his dark and midnight deed
Became the calm of Heaven.

1828.

THE SPIRIT OF THE NORTH.

Spirit of the frozen North,
Where the wave is chained and still,
And the savage bear looks forth
Nightly from his caverned hill!
Down from thy eternal throne,
From thy land of cloud and storm,
Where the meeting icebergs groan,
Sweepeth on thy wrathful form.

Spirit of the frozen wing!
Dweller of a voiceless clime,
Where no coming on of spring
Gilds the weary course of time!
Monarch of a realm untrod
By the restless feet of men,
Where alone the hand of God
'Mid His mighty works hath been!

Throned amid the ancient hills,
Piled with undecaying snow,
Flashing with the path of rills,
Frozen in their first glad flow;
Thou hast seen the gloomy north,
Gleaming with unearthly light,
Spreading its pale banners forth,
Checkered with the stars of night.

Thou hast gazed untrembling, where
Giant forms of flame were driven,
Like the spirits of the air,
Striding up the vault of heaven!
Thou hast seen that midnight glow,
Hiding moon and star and sky,
And the icy hills below
Reddening to the fearful dye.

Dark and desolate and lone,
Curtained with the tempest-cloud,
Drawn around thy ancient throne
Like oblivion's moveless shroud,
Dim and distantly the sun
Glances on thy palace walls,
But a shadow cold and dun
Broods along its pillared halls.

Lord of sunless depths and cold!
Chainer of the northern sea!
At whose feet the storm is rolled,
Who hath power to humble thee?
Spirit of the stormy north!
Bow thee to thy Maker's nod;
Bend to Him who sent thee forth,
Servant of the living God.

1829.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

Calmly the night came down
O'er Scylla's shatter'd walls;
How desolate that silent town!
How tenantless the halls,
Where yesterday her thousands trod,
And princes graced their proud abode!

Low, on the wet sea sand,
Humbled in anguish now,
The despot, midst his menial band,
Bent down his kingly brow;
And prince and peasant knelt in prayer,
For grief had made them equal there.

Again as at the morn,
The earthquake roll'd its car:
Lowly the castle-towers were borne,
That mock'd the storms of war;
The mountain reeled, its shiver'd brow
Went down among the waves below.

Up rose the kneelers then,
As the wave's rush was heard:
The horror of those fated men
Was uttered by no word.
But closer still the mother prest
The infant to her faithful breast.

One long, wild shriek went up,
Full mighty in despair;
As bow'd to drink death's bitter cup,
The thousands gathered there;
And man's strong wail and woman's cry
Blent as the waters hurried by.

On swept the whelming sea;
The mountains felt its shock,
As the long cry of agony
Thrills thro' their towers of rock;
An echo round that fatal shore
The death wail of the sufferers bore.

The morning sun shed forth
Its light upon the scene,
Where tower and palace strew'd the earth
With wrecks of what had been.
But of the thousands who were gone,
No trace was left, no vestige shown.

1828.

JUDITH AT THE TENT OF HOLOFERNES.

Night was down among the mountains,
In her dim and quiet manner,
Where Bethulia's silver fountains
Gushed beneath the Assyrian banner.
Moonlight, o'er her meek dominion,
As a mighty flag unfurled,
Like an angel's snowy pinion
Resting on a darkened world!

Faintly rose the city's murmur,
But the crowded camp was calm;
Girded in their battle armor,
Each a falchion at his arm,
Lordly chief and weary vassal
In the arms of slumber fell;
It had been a day of wassail,
And the wine had circled well.

Underneath his proud pavilion
Lay Assyria's champion,
Where the ruby's rich vermilion
Shone beside the beryl-stone.
With imperial purple laden,
Breathing in the perfumed air,
Dreams he of the Jewish maiden,
With her dark and jewelled hair.

Who is she, the pale-browed stranger,
Bending o'er that son of slaughter?
God be with thee in thy danger,
Israel's lone and peerless daughter!
She hath bared her queenly beauty
To the dark Assyrian's glance;
Now a high and sterner duty
Bids her to his couch advance.

Beautiful and pale she bendeth
In her earnest prayer to Heaven;
Look again, that maiden standeth
In the strength her God has given!
Strangely is her dark eye kindled,
Hot blood through her cheek is poured;
Lo, her every fear hath dwindled,
And her hand is on the sword!

Upward to the flashing curtain,
See, that mighty blade is driven,
And its fall!—'t is swift and certain
As the cloud-fire's track in heaven!
Down, as with a power supernal,
Twice the lifted weapon fell;
Twice, his slumber is eternal—
Who shall wake the infidel?

Sunlight on the mountains streameth
Like an air-borne wave of gold;
And Bethulia's armor gleameth
Round Judea's banner-fold.
Down they go, the mailëd warriors,
As the upper torrents sally
Headlong from their mountain-barriers
Down upon the sleeping valley.

Rouse thee from thy couch, Assyrian!
Dream no more of woman's smile;
Fiercer than the leaguered Tyrian,
Or the dark-browed sons of Nile,
Foes are on thy slumber breaking,
Chieftain, to thy battle rise!
Vain the call—he will not waken—
Headless on his couch he lies.

Who hath dimmed your boasted glory?
What hath woman's weakness done?
Whose dark brow is up before ye,
Blackening in the fierce-haired sun?
Lo! an eye that never slumbers
Looketh in its vengeance down;
And the thronged and mailëd numbers
Wither at Jehovah's frown!

1829.

METACOM.

Metacom, or Philip, the chief of the Wampanoags, was the most powerful and sagacious Sachem who ever made war upon the English.

RED as the banner which enshrouds
The warrior-dead, when strife is done,
A broken mass of crimson clouds
Hung over the departed sun.
The shadow of the western hill
Crept swiftly down, and darkly still,
As if a sullen wave of night
Were rushing on the pale twilight;
The forest-openings grew more dim,
As glimpses of the arching blue
And waking stars came softly through
The rifts of many a giant limb.
Above the wet and tangled swamp
White vapors gathered thick and damp,
And through their cloudy curtaining
Flapped many a brown and dusky wing—
Pinions that fan the moonless dun,
But fold them at the rising sun!

Beneath the closing veil of night,
And leafy bough and curling fog,
With his few warriors ranged in sight—
Scarred relics of his latest fight—
Rested the fiery Wampanoag.
He leaned upon his loaded gun,
Warm with its recent work of death,
And, save the struggling of his breath,
That, slow and hard and long-repressed,
Shook the damp folds around his breast,
An eye that was unused to scan
The sterner moods of that dark man
Had deemed his tall and silent form
With hidden passion fierce and warm,
With that fixed eye, as still and dark
As clouds which veil their lightning spark,
That of some forest-champion,
Whom sudden death had passed upon—
A giant frozen into stone!
Son of the thronëd Sachem!—Thou,
The sternest of the forest kings,—
Shall the scorned pale-one trample now,
Unambushed on thy mountain's brow,
Yea, drive his vile and hated plough
Among thy nation's holy things,
Crushing the warrior-skeleton
In scorn beneath his armëd heel,
And not a hand be left to deal
A kindred vengeance fiercely back,
And cross in blood the Spoiler's track?

He turned him to his trustiest one,
The old and war-tried Annawon—
'Brother!'—The favored warrior stood
In hushed and listening attitude—
'This night the Vision-Spirit hath
Unrolled the scroll of fate before me;
And ere the sunrise cometh, Death
Will wave his dusky pinion o'er me!
Nay, start not—well I know thy faith—
Thy weapon now may keep its sheath;
But, when the bodeful morning breaks,
And the green forest widely wakes
Unto the roar of English thunder,
Then trusted brother, be it thine
To burst upon the foeman's line,
And rend his serried strength asunder.
Perchance thyself and yet a few
Of faithful ones may struggle through,
And, rallying on the wooded plain,
Strike deep for vengeance once again,
And offer up in pale-face blood
An offering to the Indian's God.'

A musket shot—a sharp, quick yell—
And then the stifled groan of pain,
Told that another red man fell,—
And blazed a sudden light again
Across that kingly brow and eye,
Like lightning on a clouded sky,—
And a low growl, like that which thrills
The hunter of the Eastern hills,
Burst through clenched teeth and rigid lip—
And, when the great chief spoke again
His deep voice shook beneath its rein,
As wrath and grief held fellowship.

'Brother! methought when as but now
I pondered on my nation's wrong,
With sadness on his shadowy brow
My father's spirit passed along!
He pointed to the far south-west,
Where sunset's gold was growing dim,
And seemed to beckon me to him,
And to the forests of the blest!—
My father loved the white men, when

They were but children, shelterless,
For his great spirit at distress
Melted to woman's tenderness—
Nor was it given him to know
That children whom he cherished then
Would rise at length, like armëd men,
To work his people's overthrow.
Yet thus it is;—the God before
Whose awful shrine the pale ones bow
Hath frowned upon, and given o'er
The red man to the stranger now!
A few more moons, and there will be
No gathering to the council tree;
The scorchëd earth—the blackened log—
The naked bones of warriors slain,
Be the sole relics which remain
Of the once mighty Wampanoag!
The forests of our hunting-land,
With all their old and solemn green,
Will bow before the Spoiler's axe—
The plough displace the hunter's tracks,
And the tall prayer-house steeple stand
Where the Great Spirit's shrine hath been!

'Yet, brother, from this awful hour
The dying curse of Metacom
Shall linger with abiding power
Upon the spoilers of my home.
The fearful veil of things to come,
By Kitchtan's hand is lifted from
The shadows of the embryo years;
And I can see more clearly through
Than ever visioned Powwaw did,
For all the future comes unbid
Yet welcome to my trancëd view,
As battle-yell to warrior-ears!
From stream and lake and hunting-hill
Our tribes may vanish like a dream,
And even my dark curse may seem
Like idle winds when Heaven is still,
No bodeful harbinger of ill;
But, fiercer than the downright thunder,
When yawns the mountain-rock asunder,
And riven pine and knotted oak
Are reeling to the fearful stroke,
That curse shall work its master's will!
The bed of yon blue mountain stream
Shall pour a darker tide than rain—
The sea shall catch its blood-red stain,
And broadly on its banks shall gleam
The steel of those who should be brothers;
Yea, those whom one fond parent nursed
Shall meet in strife, like fiends accursed,
And trample down the once loved form,
While yet with breathing passion warm,
As fiercely as they would another's!'

The morning star sat dimly on
The lighted eastern horizon—
The deadly glare of levelled gun
Came streaking through the twilight haze
And naked to its reddest blaze,
A hundred warriors sprang in view;
One dark red arm was tossed on high,
One giant shout came hoarsely through
The clangor and the charging cry,
Just as across the scattering gloom,
Red as the naked hand of Doom,
The English volley hurtled by—
The arm—the voice of Metacom!—
One piercing shriek—one vengeful yell,
Sent like an arrow to the sky,
Told when the hunter-monarch fell!

1829.

MOUNT AGIOCHOOK.

The Indians supposed the White Mountains were the residence of powerful spirits, and in consequence rarely ascended them.

GRAY searcher of the upper air,
There's sunshine on thy ancient walls,
A crown upon thy forehead bare,
A flash upon thy waterfalls.
A rainbow glory in the cloud
Upon thine awful summit bowed,
The radiant ghost of a dead storm!
And music from the leafy shroud
Which swathes in green thy giant form,
Mellowed and softened from above
Steals downward to the lowland ear,
Sweet as the first, fond dream of love
That melts upon the maiden's ear.

The time has been, white giant, when
Thy shadows veiled the red man's home,
And over crag and serpent den,

And wild gorge where the steps of men
In chase or battle might not come,
The mountain eagle bore on high
The emblem of the free of soul,
And, midway in the fearful sky,
Sent back the Indian battle cry,
And answered to the thunder's roll.

The wigwam fires have all burned out,
The moccasin has left no track;
Nor wolf nor panther roam about
The Saco and the Merrimac.
And thou, that liftest up on high
Thy mighty barriers to the sky,
Art not the haunted mount of old,
Where on each crag of blasted stone
Some dreadful spirit found his throne,
And hid within the thick cloud fold,
Heard only in the thunder's crash,
Seen only in the lightning's flash,
When crumbled rock and riven branch
Went down before the avalanche!

No more that spirit moveth there;
The dwellers of the vale are dead;
No hunter's arrow cleaves the air;
No dry leaf rustles to his tread.
The pale-face climbs thy tallest rock,
His hands thy crystal gates unlock;
From steep to steep his maidens call,
Light laughing, like the streams that fall
In music down thy rocky wall,
And only when their careless tread
Lays bare an Indian arrow-head,
Spent and forgetful of the deer,
Think of the race that perished here.

Oh, sacred to the Indian seer,
Gray altar of the men of old!
Not vainly to the listening ear
The legends of thy past are told,—
Tales of the downward sweeping flood,
When bowed like reeds thy ancient wood;
Of armëd hands, and spectral forms;
Of giants in their leafy shroud,
And voices calling long and loud
In the dread pauses of the storms.
For still within their caverned home
Dwell the strange gods of heathendom!

THE DRUNKARD TO HIS BOTTLE.

I was thinking of the temperance lyrics the great poet of Scotland might have written had he put his name to a pledge of abstinence, a thing unhappily unknown in his day. The result of my cogitation was this poor imitation of his dialect.

Hoot!—daur ye shaw ye're face again,
Ye auld black thief o' purse an' brain?
For foul disgrace, for dool an' pain
An' shame I ban ye:
Wae 's me, that e'er my lips have ta'en
Your kiss uncanny!

Nae mair, auld knave, without a shillin'
To keep a starvin' wight frae stealin'
Ye 'll sen' me hameward, blin' and reelin',
Frae nightly swagger,
By wall an' post my pathway feelin',
Wi' mony a stagger.

Nae mair o' fights that bruise an' mangle,
Nae mair o' nets my feet to tangle,
Nae mair o' senseless brawl an' wrangle,
Wi' frien' an' wife too,
Nae mair o' deavin' din an' jangle
My feckless life through.

Ye thievin', cheatin' auld Cheap Jack,
Peddlin' your poison brose, I crack
Your banes against my ingle-back
Wi' meikle pleasure.
Deil mend ye i' his workshop black,
E'en at his leisure!

I 'll brak ye're neck, ye foul auld sinner,
I 'll spill ye're bluid, ye vile beginner
O' a' the ills an' aches that winna
Quat saul an' body!
Gie me hale breeks an' weel-spread dinner—
Deil tak' ye're toddy!

Nae mair wi' witches' broo gane gyte,
Gie me ance mair the auld delight
O' sittin' wi' my bairns in sight,
The gude wife near,
The weel-spent day, the peaceful night,
The mornin' cheer!

Cock a' ye're heids, my bairns fu' gleg,
My winsome Robin, Jean, an' Meg,
For food and claes ye shall na beg
A doited daddie.
Dance, auld wife, on your girl-day leg,
Ye 've foun' your laddie!
1829.

THE FAIR QUAKERESS.

She was a fair young girl, yet on her brow
No pale pearl shone, a blemish on the pure
And snowy lustre of its living light,
No radiant gem shone beautifully through
The shadowing of her tresses, as a star
Through the dark sky of midnight; and no wreath
Of coral circled on her queenly neck,
In mockery of the glowing cheek and lip,
Whose hue the fairy guardian of the flowers
Might never rival when her delicate touch
Tinges the rose of springtime.

Unadorned,
Save by her youthful charms, and with a garb
Simple as Nature's self, why turn to her
The proud and gifted, and the versed in all
The pageantry of fashion?

She hath not
Moved down the dance to music, when the hall
Is lighted up like sunshine, and the thrill
Of the light viol and the mellow flute,
And the deep tones of manhood, softened down
To very music melt upon the ear.—
She has not mingled with the hollow world
Nor tampered with its mockeries, until all
The delicate perceptions of the heart,
The innate modesty, the watchful sense
Of maiden dignity, are lost within
The maze of fashion and the din of crowds.

Yet Beauty hath its homage. Kings have bowed
From the tall majesty of ancient thrones
With a prostrated knee, yea, cast aside
The awfulness of time-created power
For the regardful glances of a child.
Yea, the high ones and powerful of Earth,
The helmed sons of victory, the grave
And schooled philosophers, the giant men
Of overmastering intellect, have turned
Each from the separate idol of his high
And vehement ambition for the low
Idolatry of human loveliness;
And bartered the sublimity of mind,
The godlike and commanding intellect
Which nations knelt to, for a woman's tear,
A soft-toned answer, or a wanton's smile.

And in the chastened beauty of that eye,
And in the beautiful play of that red lip,
And in the quiet smile, and in the voice
Sweet as the tuneful greeting of a bird
To the first flowers of springtime, there is more
Than the perfection of the painter's skill
Or statuary's moulding. *Mind* is there,
The pure and holy attributes of soul,
The seal of virtue, the exceeding grace
Of meekness blended with a maiden pride;
Nor deem ye that beneath the gentle smile,
And the calm temper of a chastened mind
No warmth of passion kindles, and no tide
Of quick and earnest feeling courses on
From the warm heart's pulsations. There are springs
Of deep and pure affection, hidden now,
Within that quiet bosom, which but wait
The thrilling of some kindly touch, to flow
Like waters from the Desert-rock of old.
1830.

BOLIVAR.

A dirge is wailing from the Gulf of storm-vexed Mexico,
To where through Pampas' solitudes the mighty rivers flow;
The dark Sierras hear the sound, and from each mountain rift,
Where Andes and Cordilleras their awful summits lift,
Where Cotopaxi's fiery eye glares redly upon heaven,
And Chimborazo's shattered peak the upper sky has riven;

From mount to mount, from wave to wave,
a wild and long lament,
A sob that shakes like her earthquakes
the startled continent!

A light dies out, a life is sped—the hero's
at whose word
The nations started as from sleep, and
girded on the sword;
The victor of a hundred fields where blood
was poured like rain,
And Freedom's loosened avalanche hurled
down the hosts of Spain,
The eagle soul on Junin's slope who showed
his shouting men
A grander sight than Balboa saw from
wave-washed Darien,
As from the snows with battle red died
out the sinking sun,
And broad and vast beneath him lay a
world for freedom won.

How died that victor? In the field with
banners o'er him thrown,
With trumpets in his failing ear, by
charging squadrons blown,
With scattered foemen flying fast and
fearfully before him,
With shouts of triumph swelling round
and brave men bending o'er him?
Not on his fields of victory, nor in his
council hall,
The worn and sorrowing leader heard the
inevitable call.
Alone he perished in the land he saved
from slavery's ban,
Maligned and doubted and denied, a
broken-hearted man!

Now let the New World's banners droop
above the fallen chief,
And let the mountaineer's dark eyes be
wet with tears of grief!
For slander's sting, for envy's hiss, for
friendship hatred grown,
Can funeral pomp, and tolling bell, and
priestly mass atone?
Better to leave unmourned the dead than
wrong men while they live;
What if the strong man failed or erred,
could not his own forgive?
O people freed by him, repent above your
hero's bier:
The sole resource of late remorse is now
his tomb to rear!

1830.

ISABELLA OF AUSTRIA.

Isabella, Infanta of Parma, and consort of Joseph of Austria, predicted her own death, immediately after her marriage with the Emperor. Amidst the gayety and splendor of Vienna and Presburg, she was reserved and melancholy; she believed that Heaven had given her a view of the future, and that her child, the namesake of the great Maria Theresa, would perish with her. Her prediction was fulfilled.

'Midst the palace bowers of Hungary,
imperial Presburg's pride,
With the noble born and beautiful assembled at her side,
She stood beneath the summer heavens,
the soft wind sighing on,
Stirring the green and arching boughs
like dancers in the sun.
The beautiful pomegranate flower, the
snowy orange bloom,
The lotus and the trailing vine, the rose's
meek perfume,
The willow crossing with its green some
statue's marble hair,
All that might charm the fresh young
sense, or light the soul, was there!

But she, a monarch's treasured one, leaned
gloomily apart,
With her dark eyes tearfully cast down,
and a shadow on her heart.
Young, beautiful, and dearly loved, what
sorrow hath she known?
Are not the hearts and swords of all held
sacred as her own?
Is not her lord the kingliest in battle-field
or tower?
The wisest in the council-hall, the gayest
in the bower?
Is not his love as full and deep as his own
Danube's tide?
And wherefore in her princely home weeps
Isabel, his bride?

She raised her jewelled hand, and flung
her veiling tresses back,
Bathing its snowy tapering within their
glossy black.
A tear fell on the orange leaves, rich gem
and mimic blossom,
And fringed robe shook fearfully upon
her sighing bosom.
'Smile on, smile on,' she murmured low,
'for all is joy around,
Shadow and sunshine, stainless sky, soft
airs, and blossomed ground.
'T is meet the light of heart should smile,
when nature's smile is fair,
And melody and fragrance meet, twin
sisters of the air.

'But ask me not to share with you the
beauty of the scene,
The fountain-fall, mosaic walk, and
breadths of tender green;
And point not to the mild blue sky, or
glorious summer sun,
I know how very fair is all the hand of
God has done.
The hills, the sky, the sunlit cloud, the
waters leaping forth,
The swaying trees, the scented flowers,
the dark green robes of earth,—
I love them well, but I have learned to
turn aside from all,
And nevermore my heart must own their
sweet but fatal thrall.

'And I could love the noble one whose
mighty name I bear,
And closer to my breaking heart his
princely image wear,
And I could love our sweet young flower,
unfolding day by day,
And taste of that unearthly joy which
mothers only may,—
But what am I to cling to these?—A voice
is in my ear,
A shadow lingers at my side, the death-
wail and the bier!
The cold and starless night of Death
where day may never beam,
The silence and forgetfulness, the sleep
that hath no dream!

'O God, to leave this fair bright world,
and more than all to know
The moment when the Spectral One shall
strike his fearful blow;
To know the day, the very hour, to feel
the tide roll on,
To shudder at the gloom before and weep
the sunshine gone;
To count the days, the few short days, of
light and love and breath
Between me and the noisome grave, the
voiceless home of death!
Alas!—if feeling, knowing this, I murmur
at my doom,
Let not Thy frowning, O my God! lend
darkness to the tomb.

'Oh, I have borne my spirit up, and
smiled amidst the chill
Remembrance of my certain doom which
lingers with me still;
I would not cloud my fair child's brow,
nor let a tear-drop dim
The eye that met my wedded lord's, lest
it should sadden him;
But there are moments when the strength
of feeling must have way;
That hidden tide of unnamed woe nor
fear nor love can stay.
Smile on, smile on, light-hearted ones!
Your sun of joy is high:
Smile on, and leave the doomed of Heaven
alone to weep and die!'

A funeral chant was wailing through
Vienna's holy pile,
A coffin with its gorgeous pall was borne
along the aisle;
The drooping flags of many lands waved
slow above the dead,
A mighty band of mourners came, a king
was at its head,—
A youthful king, with mournful tread,
and dim and tearful eye;
He scarce had dreamed that one so pure
as his fair bride could die.
And sad and long above the throng the
funeral anthem rung:
'Mourn for the hope of Austria! Mourn
for the loved and young!'

The wail went up from other lands, the valleys of the Hun,
Fair Parma with its orange bowers, and hills of vine and sun:
The lilies of imperial France drooped as the sound went by,
The long lament of cloistered Spain was mingled with the cry.
The dwellers in Colorno's halls, the Slowak at his cave,
The bowed at the Escurial, the Magyar stoutly brave,
All wept the early stricken flower; and still the anthem rung:
'Mourn for the pride of Austria! Mourn for the loved and young!'

1831.

THE FRATRICIDE.

He stood on the brow of the well-known hill,
Its few gray oaks moan'd over him still;
The last of that forest which cast the gloom
Of its shadow at eve o'er his childhood's home;
And the beautiful valley beneath him lay
With its quivering leaves, and its streams at play,
And the sunshine over it all the while
Like the golden shower of the Eastern isle.

He knew the rock with its fingering vine,
And its gray top touch'd by the slant sunshine,
And the delicate stream which crept beneath
Soft as the flow of an infant's breath;
And the flowers which lean'd to the West wind's sigh,
Kissing each ripple which glided by;
And he knew every valley and wooded swell,
For the visions of childhood are treasured well.

Why shook the old man as his eye glanced down
That narrow ravine where the rude cliffs frown,
With their shaggy brows and their teeth of stone,
And their grim shade back from the sunlight thrown?
What saw he there save the dreary glen,
Where the shy fox crept from the eye of men,
And the great owl sat on the leafy limb
That the hateful sun might not look on him?

Fix'd, glassy, and strange was that old man's eye,
As if a spectre were stealing by,
And glared it still on that narrow dell
Where thicker and browner the twilight fell;
Yet at every sigh of the fitful wind,
Or stirring of leaves in the wood behind,
His wild glance wander'd the landscape o'er,
Then fix'd on that desolate dell once more.

Oh, who shall tell of the thoughts which ran
Through the dizzied brain of that gray old man?
His childhood's home, and his father's toil,
And his sister's kiss, and his mother's smile,
And his brother's laughter and gamesome mirth,
At the village school and the winter hearth;
The beautiful thoughts of his early time,
Ere his heart grew dark with its later crime.

And darker and wilder his visions came
Of the deadly feud and the midnight flame,
Of the Indian's knife with its slaughter red,
Of the ghastly forms of the scalpless dead,
Of his own fierce deeds in that fearful hour
When the terrible Brandt was forth in power,
And he clasp'd his hands o'er his burning eye
To shadow the vision which glided by.

It came with the rush of the battle-storm—
With a brother's shaken and kneeling form,
And his prayer for life when a brother's arm
Was lifted above him for mortal harm,
And the fiendish curse, and the groan of death,
And the welling of blood, and the gurgling breath,
And the scalp torn off while each nerve could feel
The wrenching hand and the jagged steel!

And the old man groan'd—for he saw, again,
The mangled corse of his kinsman slain,
As it lay where his hand had hurl'd it then,
At the shadow'd foot of that fearful glen!
And it rose erect, with the death-pang grim,
And pointed its bloodied finger at him!
And his heart grew cold—and the curse of Cain
Burn'd like a fire in the old man's brain.

Oh, had he not seen that spectre rise
On the blue of the cold Canadian skies?
From the lakes which sleep in the ancient wood,
It had risen to whisper its tale of blood,
And follow'd his bark to the sombre shore,
And glared by night through the wigwam door;
And here, on his own familiar hill,
It rose on his haunted vision still!

Whose corse was that which the morrow's sun,
Through the opening boughs, look'd calmly on?
There were those who bent o'er that rigid face
Who well in its darken'd lines might trace
The features of him who, a traitor, fled
From a brother whose blood himself had shed,
And there, on the spot where he strangely died,
They made the grave of the Fratricide!

1831.

ISABEL.

I DO not love thee, Isabel, and yet thou
art most fair!
I know the tempting of thy lips, the witchcraft of thy hair,
The winsome smile that might beguile the shy bird from his tree;
But from their spell I know so well, I shake my manhood free.

I might have loved thee, Isabel; I know
I should if aught
Of all thy words and ways had told of one unselfish thought;
If through the cloud of fashion, the pictured veil of art,
One casual flash had broken warm, earnest from the heart.

But words are idle, Isabel, and if I praise or blame,
Or cheer or warn, it matters not; thy life will be the same;
Still free to use, and still abuse, unmindful of the harm,
The fatal gift of beauty, the power to choose and charm.

Then go thy way, fair Isabel, nor heed that from thy train
A doubtful follower falls away, enough will still remain.
But what the long-rebuking years may bring to them or thee
No prophet and no prophet's son am I to guess or see.

I do not love thee, Isabel; I would as soon put on
A crown of slender frost-work beneath the heated sun,
Or chase the winds of summer, or trust the sleeping sea,
Or lean upon a shadow as think of loving thee.

1832.

STANZAS.

Bind up thy tresses, thou beautiful one,
Of brown in the shadow and gold in the sun!
Free should their delicate lustre be thrown
O'er a forehead more pure than the Parian stone;
Shaming the light of those Orient pearls
Which bind o'er its whiteness thy soft wreathing curls.

Smile, for thy glance on the mirror is thrown,
And the face of an angel is meeting thine own!
Beautiful creature, I marvel not
That thy cheek a lovelier tint hath caught;
And the kindling light of thine eye hath told
Of a dearer wealth than the miser's gold.

Away, away, there is danger here!
A terrible phantom is bending near:
Ghastly and sunken, his rayless eye
Scowls on thy loveliness scornfully,
With no human look, with no human breath,
He stands beside thee, the haunter, Death!

Fly! but, alas! he will follow still,
Like a moonlight shadow, beyond thy will;
In thy noonday walk, in thy midnight sleep,
Close at thy hand will that phantom keep;
Still in thine ear shall his whispers be;
Woe, that such phantom should follow thee!

In the lighted hall where the dancers go,
Like beautiful spirits, to and fro;
When thy fair arms glance in their stainless white,
Like ivory bathed in still moonlight;
And not one star in the holy sky
Hath a clearer light than thine own blue eye!

Oh, then, even then, he will follow thee,
As the ripple follows the bark at sea;
In the soften'd light, in the turning dance,
He will fix on thine his dead, cold glance;
The chill of his breath on thy cheek shall linger,
And thy warm blood shrink from his icy finger!

And yet there is hope. Embrace it now,
While thy soul is open as thy brow;
While thy heart is fresh, while its feelings still
Gush clear as the unsoil'd mountain-rill;
And thy smiles are free as the airs of spring,
Greeting and blessing each breathing thing.

When the after cares of thy life shall come,
When the bud shall wither before its bloom;
When thy soul is sick of the emptiness
And changeful fashion of human bliss;
When the weary torpor of blighted feeling
Over thy heart as ice is stealing;

Then, when thy spirit is turn'd above,
By the mild rebuke of the Chastener's love;
When the hope of that joy in thy heart is stirr'd,
Which eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
Then will that phantom of darkness be
Gladness, and promise, and bliss to thee.

1832.

MOGG MEGONE.

This poem was commenced in 1830, but did not assume its present shape until four years after. It deals with the border strife of the early settlers of eastern New England and their savage neighbors; but its personages and incidents are mainly fictitious. Looking at it, at the present time, it suggests the idea of a big Indian in his war-paint strutting about in Sir Walter Scott's plaid.

PART I.

Who stands on that cliff, like a figure of stone,
Unmoving and tall in the light of the sky,

Where the spray of the cataract sparkles on high,
Lonely and sternly, save Mogg Megone?[78]
Close to the verge of the rock is he,
While beneath him the Saco its work is doing,
Hurrying down to its grave, the sea,
And slow through the rock its pathway hewing!
Far down, through the mist of the falling river,
Which rises up like an incense ever,
The splintered points of the crags are seen,
With water howling and vexed between,
While the scooping whirl of the pool beneath
Seems an open throat, with its granite teeth!

But Mogg Megone never trembled yet
Wherever his eye or his foot was set.
He is watchful: each form in the moonlight dim.
Of rock or of tree, is seen of him:
He listens; each sound from afar is caught,
The faintest shiver of leaf and limb:
But he sees not the waters, which foam and fret,
Whose moonlit spray has his moccasin wet,—
And the roar of their rushing, he hears it not.

The moonlight, through the open bough
Of the gnarl'd beech, whose naked root
Coils like a serpent at his foot,
Falls, checkered, on the Indian's brow.
His head is bare, save only where
Waves in the wind one lock of hair,
Reserved for him, whoe'er he be,
More mighty than Megone in strife,
When breast to breast and knee to knee,
Above the fallen warrior's life
Gleams, quick and keen, the scalping-knife.

Megone hath his knife and hatchet and gun,
And his gaudy and tasselled blanket on:
His knife hath a handle with gold inlaid,
And magic words on its polished blade,—
'T was the gift of Castine to Mogg Megone,[79]
For a scalp or twain from the Yengees torn:
His gun was the gift of the Tarrantine,
And Modocawando's wives had strung
The brass and the beads, which tinkle and shine
On the polished breech, and broad bright line
Of beaded wampum around it hung.

What seeks Megone? His foes are near,—
Grey Jocelyn's eye is never sleeping,[80]
And the garrison lights are burning clear,
Where Philip's men their watch are keeping.[81]
Let him hie him away through the dank river fog,
Never rustling the boughs nor displacing the rocks,
For the eyes and the ears which are watching for Mogg
Are keener than those of the wolf or the fox.

He starts,—there 's a rustle among the leaves:
Another,—the click of his gun is heard!
A footstep,—is it the step of Cleaves,
With Indian blood on his English sword?
Steals Harmon down from the sands of York,[82]
With hand of iron and foot of cork?
Has Scamman, versed in Indian wile,
For vengeance left his vine-hung isle?[83]
Hark! at that whistle, soft and low,
How lights the eye of Mogg Megone!
A smile gleams o'er his dusky brow,—
'Boon welcome, Johnny Boniton!'

Out steps, with cautious foot and slow,
And quick, keen glances to and fro,
The hunted outlaw, Boniton![84]
A low, lean, swarthy man is he,
With blanket-garb and buskined knee,
And naught of English fashion on;
For he hates the race from whence he sprung,
And he couches his words in the Indian tongue.

'Hush,—let the Sachem's voice be weak;
The water-rat shall hear him speak,—
The owl shall whoop in the white man's ear,
That Mogg Megone, with his scalps, is here!'
He pauses,—dark, over cheek and brow,
A flush, as of shame, is stealing now:
'Sachem!' he says, 'let me have the land,
Which stretches away upon either hand,
As far about as my feet can stray
In the half of a gentle summer's day,
From the leaping brook to the Saco river,—[85]
And the fair-haired girl thou hast sought of me
Shall sit in the Sachem's wigwam, and be
The wife of Mogg Megone forever.'

There 's a sudden light in the Indian's glance,
A moment's trace of powerful feeling,
Of love or triumph, or both perchance,
Over his proud, calm features stealing.
'The words of my father are very good;
He shall have the land, and water, and wood;
And he who harms the Sagamore John,
Shall feel the knife of Mogg Megone;
But the fawn of the Yengees shall sleep on my breast,
And the bird of the clearing shall sing in my nest.'

'But, father!'—and the Indian's hand
Falls gently on the white man's arm,
And with a smile as shrewdly bland
As the deep voice is slow and calm,—
'Where is my father's singing-bird,—
The sunny eye, and sunset hair?
I know I have my father's word
And that his word is good and fair;
But will my father tell me where
Megone shall go and look for his bride?—
For he sees her not by her father's side.'

The dark, stern eye of Boniton
Flashes over the features of Mogg Megone,
In one of those glances which search within;
But the stolid calm of the Indian alone
Remains where the trace of emotion has been.
Does the Sachem doubt? Let him go with me,
And the eyes of the Sachem his bride shall see.'

Cautious and slow, with pauses oft,
And watchful eyes and whispers soft,
The twain are stealing through the wood,
Leaving the downward-rushing flood,
Whose deep and solemn roar behind
Grows fainter on the evening wind.

Hark!—is that the angry howl
Of the wolf, the hills among?—
Or the hooting of the owl,
On his leafy cradle swung?—
Quickly glancing, to and fro,
Listening to each sound they go
Round the columns of the pine,
Indistinct, in shadow, seeming
Like some old and pillared shrine;
With the soft and white moonshine,
Round the foliage-tracery shed
Of each column's branching head,
For its lamps of worship gleaming!
And the sounds awakened there,
In the pine-leaves fine and small,
Soft and sweetly musical,
By the fingers of the air,
For the anthem's dying fall
Lingering round some temple's wall!
Niche and cornice round and round
Wailing like the ghost of sound!
Is not Nature's worship thus,
Ceaseless ever, going on?
Hath it not a voice for us
In the thunder, or the tone
Of the leaf-harp faint and small,
Speaking to the unsealed ear
Words of blended love and fear,
Of the mighty Soul of all?

Naught had the twain of thoughts like these
As they wound along through the crowded trees,
Where never had rung the axeman's stroke
On the gnarlëd trunk of the rough-barked oak;—

Climbing the dead tree's mossy log,
Breaking the mesh of the bramble fine,
Turning aside the wild grapevine,
And lightly crossing the quaking bog
Whose surface shakes at the leap of the frog,
And out of whose pools the ghostly fog
Creeps into the chill moonshine!

Yet, even that Indian's ear had heard
The preaching of the Holy Word:
Sanchekantacket's isle of sand
Was once his father's hunting land,
Where zealous Hiacoomes stood,—[86]
The wild apostle of the wood,
Shook from his soul the fear of harm,
And trampled on the Powwaw's charm;
Until the wizard's curses hung
Suspended on his palsying tongue,
And the fierce warrior, grim and tall,
Trembled before the forest Paul!

A cottage hidden in the wood,—
Red through its seams a light is glowing,
On rock and bough and tree-trunk rude,
A narrow lustre throwing.
'Who's there?' a clear, firm voice demands;
'Hold, Ruth,—'t is I, the Sagamore!'
Quick, at the summons, hasty hands
Unclose the bolted door;
And on the outlaw's daughter shine
The flashes of the kindled pine.

Tall and erect the maiden stands,
Like some young priestess of the wood,
The freeborn child of Solitude,
And bearing still the wild and rude,
Yet noble trace of Nature's hands.
Her dark brown cheek has caught its stain
More from the sunshine than the rain;
Yet, where her long fair hair is parting,
A pure white brow into light is starting;
And, where the folds of her blanket sever,
Are neck and a bosom as white as ever
The foam-wreaths rise on the leaping river.
But in the convulsive quiver and grip
Of the muscles around her bloodless lip,
There is something painful and sad to see;
And her eye has a glance more sternly wild
Than even that of a forest child
In its fearless and untamed freedom should be.
Yet, seldom in hall or court are seen
So queenly a form and so noble a mien,
As freely and smiling she welcomes them there,—
Her outlawed sire and Mogg Megone:
'Pray, father, how does thy hunting fare?
And, Sachem, say,—does Scamman wear,
In spite of thy promise, a scalp of his own?'
Hurried and light is the maiden's tone;
But a fearful meaning lurks within
Her glance, as it questions the eye of Megone,—
An awful meaning of guilt and sin!—
The Indian hath opened his blanket, and there
Hangs a human scalp by its long damp hair!
With hand upraised, with quick-drawn breath,
She meets that ghastly sign of death.
In one long, glassy, spectral stare
The enlarging eye is fastened there,
As if that mesh of pale brown hair
Had power to change at sight alone
Even as the fearful locks which wound
Medusa's fatal forehead round,
The gazer into stone.
With such a look Herodias read
The features of the bleeding head,
So looked the mad Moor on his dead,
Or the young Cenci as she stood,
O'er-dabbled with a father's blood!

Look!—feeling melts that frozen glance,
It moves that marble countenance,
As if at once within her strove
Pity with shame, and hate with love.
The Past recalls its joy and pain,
Old memories rise before her brain,—
The lips which love's embraces met,
The hand her tears of parting wet,
The voice whose pleading tones beguiled
The pleased ear of the forest-child,—

And tears she may no more repress
Reveal her lingering tenderness.

Oh, woman wronged can cherish hate
More deep and dark than manhood may;
But when the mockery of Fate
Hath left Revenge its chosen way,
And the fell curse, which years have nursed,
Full on the spoiler's head hath burst,—
When all her wrong, and shame, and pain,
Burns fiercely on his heart and brain,—
Still lingers something of the spell
Which bound her to the traitor's bosom,—
Still, midst the vengeful fires of hell,
Some flowers of old affection blossom.

John Boniton's eyebrows together are drawn
With a fierce expression of wrath and scorn,—
He hoarsely whispers, 'Ruth, beware!
Is this the time to be playing the fool,—
Crying over a paltry lock of hair,
Like a love-sick girl at school?—
Curse on it! an Indian can see and hear:
Away,—and prepare our evening cheer!'

How keenly the Indian is watching now
Her tearful eye and her varying brow,—
With a serpent eye, which kindles and burns,
Like a fiery star in the upper air:
On sire and daughter his fierce glance turns:—
'Has my old white father a scalp to spare?
For his young one loves the pale brown hair
Of the scalp of an English dog far more
Than Mogg Megone, or his wigwam floor;
Go,—Mogg is wise: he will keep his land,—
And Sagamore John, when he feels with his hand,
Shall miss his scalp where it grew before.'

The moment's gust of grief is gone,—
The lip is clenched,—the tears are still,—
God pity thee, Ruth Boniton!
With what a strength of will
Are nature's feelings in thy breast,
As with an iron hand, repressed!
And how, upon that nameless woe,
Quick as the pulse can come and go,
While shakes the unsteadfast knee, and yet
The bosom heaves,—the eye is wet,—
Has thy dark spirit power to stay
The heart's wild current on its way?
And whence that baleful strength of guile,
Which over that still working brow
And tearful eye and cheek can throw
The mockery of a smile?
Warned by her father's blackening frown,
With one strong effort crushing down
Grief, hate, remorse, she meets again
The savage murderer's sullen gaze,
And scarcely look or tone betrays
How the heart strives beneath its chain.

'Is the Sachem angry,—angry with Ruth,
Because she cries with an ache in her tooth,—[87]
Which would make a Sagamore jump and cry,
And look about with a woman's eye?
No,—Ruth will sit in the Sachem's door
And braid the mats for his wigwam floor,
And broil his fish and tender fawn,
And weave his wampum, and grind his corn,—
For she loves the brave and the wise, and none
Are braver and wiser than Mogg Megone!'

The Indian's brow is clear once more:
With grave, calm face, and half-shut eye,
He sits upon the wigwam floor,
And watches Ruth go by,
Intent upon her household care;
And ever and anon, the while,
Or on the maiden, or her fare,
Which smokes in grateful promise there,
Bestows his quiet smile.

Ah, Mogg Megone!—what dreams are thine,
But those which love's own fancies dress,—

The sum of Indian happiness!—
A wigwam, where the warm sunshine
Looks in among the groves of pine,—
A stream, where, round thy light canoe,
The trout and salmon dart in view,
And the fair girl, before thee now,
Spreading thy mat with hand of snow,
Or plying, in the dews of morn,
Her hoe amidst thy patch of corn,
Or offering up, at eve, to thee,
Thy birchen dish of hominy!

From the rude board of Boniton,
Venison and succotash have gone,—
For long these dwellers of the wood
Have felt the gnawing want of food.
But untasted of Ruth is the frugal cheer,—
With head averted, yet ready ear,
She stands by the side of her austere sire,
Feeding, at times, the unequal fire
With the yellow knots of the pitch-pine tree.
Whose flaring light, as they kindle, falls
On the cottage-roof, and its black log walls,
And over its inmates three.

From Sagamore Boniton's hunting flask
The fire-water burns at the lip of Megone:
'Will the Sachem hear what his father shall ask?
Will he make his mark, that it may be known,
On the speaking-leaf, that he gives the land,
From the Sachem's own, to his father's hand?'
The fire-water shines in the Indian's eyes,
As he rises, the white man's bidding to do:
'Wuttamuttata—weekan![88] Mogg is wise,—
For the water he drinks is strong and new,—
Mogg's heart is great!—will he shut his hand,
When his father asks for a little land?'—
With unsteady fingers, the Indian has drawn
On the parchment the shape of a hunter's bow,

'Boon water,—boon water,—Sagamore John!
Wuttamuttata,—weekan! our hearts will grow!'
He drinks yet deeper,—he mutters low,—
He reels on his bear-skin to and fro,—
His head falls down on his naked breast,—
He struggles, and sinks to a drunken rest.

'Humph—drunk as a beast!'—and Boniton's brow
Is darker than ever with evil thought—
'The fool has signed his warrant; but how
And when shall the deed be wrought?
Speak, Ruth! why, what the devil is there,
To fix thy gaze in that empty air?—
Speak, Ruth! by my soul, if I thought that tear
Which shames thyself and our purpose here,
Were shed for that cursed and pale-faced dog,
Whose green scalp hangs from the belt of Mogg,
And whose beastly soul is in Satan's keeping;
This—this!'—he dashes his hand upon
The rattling stock of his loaded gun,—
'Should send thee with him to do thy weeping!'

'Father!'—the eye of Boniton
Sinks at that low, sepulchral tone,
Hollow and deep, as it were spoken
By the unmoving tongue of death,—
Or from some statue's lips had broken,—
A sound without a breath!
'Father!—my life I value less
Than yonder fool his gaudy dress;
And how it ends it matters not,
By heart-break or by rifle-shot;
But spare awhile the scoff and threat,—
Our business is not finished yet.'

'True, true, my girl,—I only meant
To draw up again the bow unbent.
Harm thee, my Ruth! I only sought
To frighten off thy gloomy thought;
Come,—let's be friends!' He seeks to clasp

His daughter's cold, damp hand in his.
Ruth startles from her father's grasp,
As if each nerve and muscle felt,
Instinctively, the touch of guilt
Through all their subtle sympathies.

He points her to the sleeping Mogg:
'What shall be done with yonder dog?
Scamman is dead, and revenge is thine,—
The deed is signed and the land is mine;
And this drunken fool is of use no more,
Save as thy hopeful bridegroom, and sooth,
'T were Christian mercy to finish him, Ruth,
Now, while he lies like a beast on our floor,—
If not for thine, at least for his sake,
Rather than let the poor dog awake
To drain my flask, and claim as his bride
Such a forest devil to run by his side,—
Such a Wetuomanit[89] as thou wouldst make!'

He laughs at his jest. Hush—what is there?—
The sleeping Indian is striving to rise,
With his knife in his hand, and glaring eyes!—
'Wagh!—Mogg will have the pale-face's hair,
For his knife is sharp, and his fingers can help
The hair to pull and the skin to peel,—
Let him cry like a woman and twist like an eel,
The great Captain Scamman must lose his scalp!
And Ruth, when she sees it, shall dance with Mogg.'
His eyes are fixed,—but his lips draw in,—
With a low, hoarse chuckle, and fiendish grin,—
And he sinks again, like a senseless log.

Ruth does not speak,—she does not stir;
But she gazes down on the murderer,
Whose broken and dreamful slumbers tell
Too much for her ear of that deed of hell.
She sees the knife, with its slaughter red,
And the dark fingers clenching the bear-skin bed!

What thoughts of horror and madness whirl
Through the burning brain of that fallen girl!

John Boniton lifts his gun to his eye,
Its muzzle is close to the Indian's ear,—
But he drops it again. 'Some one may be nigh,
And I would not that even the wolves should hear.'
He draws his knife from his deer-skin belt,—
Its edge with his fingers is slowly felt;—
Kneeling down on one knee, by the Indian's side,
From his throat he opens the blanket wide;
And twice or thrice he feebly essays
A trembling hand with the knife to raise.

'I cannot,'—he mutters,—'did he not save
My life from a cold and wintry grave,
When the storm came down from Agiochook,
And the north-wind howled, and the tree-tops shook,—
And I strove, in the drifts of the rushing snow,
Till my knees grew weak and I could not go,
And I felt the cold to my vitals creep,
And my heart's blood stiffen, and pulses sleep!
I cannot strike him—Ruth Boniton!
In the Devil's name, tell me—what 's to be done?'

Oh, when the soul, once pure and high,
Is stricken down from Virtue's sky,
As, with the downcast star of morn,
Some gems of light are with it drawn,
And, through its night of darkness, play
Some tokens of its primal day,
Some lofty feelings linger still,—
The strength to dare, the nerve to meet
Whatever threatens with defeat
Its all-indomitable will!—
But lacks the mean of mind and heart,
Though eager for the gains of crime,
Or, at his chosen place and time,

The strength to bear his evil part;
And, shielded by his very Vice,
Escapes from Crime by Cowardice.

Ruth starts erect,—with bloodshot eye,
And lips drawn tight across her teeth
Showing their locked embrace beneath,
In the red firelight: 'Mogg must die!
Give me the knife!' The outlaw turns,
Shuddering in heart and limb away,
But, fitfully there, the hearth-fire burns,
And he sees on the wall strange shadows play.
A lifted arm, a tremulous blade,
Are dimly pictured in light and shade,
Plunging down in the darkness. Hark, that cry
Again—and again—he sees it fall,
That shadowy arm down the lighted wall!
He hears quick footsteps—a shape flits by—
The door on its rusted hinges creaks:—
'Ruth—daughter Ruth!' the outlaw shrieks.
But no sound comes back,—he is standing alone
By the mangled corse of Mogg Megone!

PART II.

'T is morning over Norridgewock,—
On tree and wigwam, wave and rock,
Bathed in the autumnal sunshine, stirred
At intervals by breeze and bird,
And wearing all the hues which glow
In heaven's own pure and perfect bow,
That glorious picture of the air,
Which summer's light-robed angel forms
On the dark ground of fading storms,
With pencil dipped in sunbeams there,—
And, stretching out, on either hand,
O'er all that wide and unshorn land,
Till, weary of its gorgeousness,
The aching and the dazzled eye
Rests, gladdened, on the calm blue sky,—
Slumbers the mighty wilderness!
The oak, upon the windy hill,
Its dark green burthen upward heaves—
The hemlock broods above its rill,
Its cone-like foliage darker still,
Against the birch's graceful stem,
And the rough walnut-bough receives
The sun upon its crowded leaves,
Each colored like a topaz gem;
And the tall maple wears with them
The coronal, which autumn gives,
The brief, bright sign of ruin near,
The hectic of a dying year!

The hermit priest, who lingers now
On the Bald Mountain's shrubless brow,
The gray and thunder-smitten pile
Which marks afar the Desert Isle,[90]
While gazing on the scene below,
May half forget the dreams of home,
That nightly with his slumbers come,—
The tranquil skies of sunny France,
The peasant's harvest song and dance,
The vines around the hillsides wreathing,
The soft airs midst their clusters breathing,
The wings which dipped, the stars which shone
Within thy bosom, blue Garonne!
And round the Abbey's shadowed wall,
At morning spring and even-fall,
Sweet voices in the still air singing,—
The chant of many a holy hymn,—
The solemn bell of vespers ringing,—
And hallowed torchlight falling dim
On pictured saint and seraphim!
For here beneath him lies unrolled,
Bathed deep in morning's flood of gold,
A vision gorgeous as the dream
Of the beatified may seem,
When, as his Church's legends say,
Borne upward in ecstatic bliss,
The rapt enthusiast soars away
Unto a brighter world than this:
A mortal's glimpse beyond the pale,—
A moment's lifting of the veil!

Far eastward o'er the lovely bay,
Penobscot's clustered wigwams lay;
And gently from that Indian town
The verdant hillside slopes adown,
To where the sparkling waters play
Upon the yellow sands below;
And shooting round the winding shores
Of narrow capes, and isles which lie
Slumbering to ocean's lullaby,—
With birchen boat and glancing oars,

The red men to their fishing go;
While from their planting ground is borne
The treasure of the golden corn,
By laughing girls, whose dark eyes glow
Wild through the locks which o'er them flow.
The wrinkled squaw, whose toil is done,
Sits on her bear-skin in the sun,
Watching the huskers, with a smile
For each full ear which swells the pile;
And the old chief, who nevermore
May bend the bow or pull the oar,
Smokes gravely in his wigwam door,
Or slowly shapes, with axe of stone,
The arrow-head from flint and bone.

Beneath the westward turning eye
A thousand wooded islands lie,
Gems of the waters! with each hue
Of brightness set in ocean's blue.
Each bears aloft its tuft of trees
Touched by the pencil of the frost,
And, with the motion of each breeze,
A moment seen, a moment lost,
Changing and blent, confused and tossed,
The brighter with the darker crossed,
Their thousand tints of beauty glow
Down in the restless waves below,
And tremble in the sunny skies.
As if, from waving bough to bough,
Flitted the birds of paradise.
There sleep Placentia's group, and there
Père Breteaux marks the hour of prayer;
And there, beneath the sea-worn cliff,
On which the Father's hut is seen,
The Indian stays his rocking skiff,
And peers the hemlock-boughs between,
Half trembling, as he seeks to look[91]
Upon the Jesuit's Cross and Book.
There, gloomily against the sky
The Dark Isles rear their summits high;
And Desert Rock, abrupt and bare,
Lifts its gray turrets in the air,
Seen from afar, like some stronghold
Built by the ocean kings of old;
And, faint as smoke-wreath white and thin,
Swells in the north vast Katahdin:
And, wandering from its marshy feet,
The broad Penobscot comes to meet
And mingle with his own bright bay.
Slow sweep his dark and gathering floods,
Arched over by the ancient woods,
Which Time, in those dim solitudes,
Wielding the dull axe of Decay,
Alone hath ever shorn away.

Not thus, within the woods which hide
The beauty of thy azure tide,
And with their falling timbers block
Thy broken currents, Kennebec!
Gazes the white man on the wreck
Of the down-trodden Norridgewock;
In one lone village hemmed at length,
In battle shorn of half their strength,
Turned, like the panther in his lair,
With his fast-flowing life-blood wet,
For one last struggle of despair,
Wounded and faint, but tameless yet!
Unreaped, upon the planting lands,
The scant, neglected harvest stands:
No shout is there, no dance, no song:
The aspect of the very child
Scowls with a meaning sad and wild
Of bitterness and wrong.
The almost infant Norridgewock
Essays to lift the tomahawk;
And plucks his father's knife away,
To mimic, in his frightful play,
The scalping of an English foe:
Wreathes on his lip a horrid smile,
Burns, like a snake's, his small eye, while
Some bough or sapling meets his blow.
The fisher, as he drops his line,
Starts, when he sees the hazels quiver
Along the margin of the river,
Looks up and down the rippling tide,
And grasps the firelock at his side.
For Bomazeen from Tacconock[92]
Has sent his runners to Norridgewock,
With tidings that Moulton and Harmon of York
Far up the river have come:
They have left their boats, they have entered the wood,
And filled the depths of the solitude
With the sound of the ranger's drum.

On the brow of a hill, which slopes to meet
The flowing river, and bathe its feet;

The bare-washed rock, and the drooping grass,
And the creeping vine, as the waters pass,
A rude and unshapely chapel stands,
Built up in that wild by unskilled hands,
Yet the traveller knows it a place of prayer,
For the holy sign of the cross is there:
And should he chance at that place to be,
Of a Sabbath morn, or some hallowed day,
When prayers are made and masses are said,
Some for the living and some for the dead,
Well might that traveller start to see
The tall dark forms, that take their way
From the birch canoe, on the river shore,
And the forest paths, to that chapel door;
And marvel to mark the naked knees
And the dusky foreheads bending there,
While, in coarse white vesture, over these
In blessing or in prayer,
Stretching abroad his thin pale hands,
Like a shrouded ghost, the Jesuit stands.[93]

Two forms are now in that chapel dim,
The Jesuit, silent and sad and pale,
Anxiously heeding some fearful tale,
Which a stranger is telling him.
That stranger's garb is soiled and torn,
And wet with dew and loosely worn;
Her fair neglected hair falls down
O'er cheeks with wind and sunshine brown;
Yet still, in that disordered face,
The Jesuit's cautious eye can trace
Those elements of former grace
Which, half effaced, seem scarcely less,
Even now, than perfect loveliness.

With drooping head, and voice so low
That scarce it meets the Jesuit's ears,
While through her claspëd fingers flow,
From the heart's fountain, hot and slow,
Her penitential tears,—
She tells the story of the woe
And evil of her years.

'O father, bear with me; my heart
Is sick and death-like, and my brain
Seems girdled with a fiery chain,
Whose scorching links will never part,
And never cool again.
Bear with me while I speak, but turn
Away that gentle eye, the while;
The fires of guilt more fiercely burn
Beneath its holy smile;
For half I fancy I can see
My mother's sainted look in thee.

'My dear lost mother! sad and pale,
Mournfully sinking day by day,
And with a hold on life as frail
As frosted leaves, that, thin and gray,
Hang feebly on their parent spray,
And tremble in the gale;
Yet watching o'er my childishness
With patient fondness, not the less
For all the agony which kept
Her blue eye wakeful, while I slept;
And checking every tear and groan
That haply might have waked my own,
And bearing still, without offence,
My idle words, and petulance;
Reproving with a tear, and, while
The tooth of pain was keenly preying
Upon her very heart, repaying
My brief repentance with a smile.

'Oh, in her meek, forgiving eye
There was a brightness not of mirth,
A light whose clear intensity
Was borrowed not of earth.
Along her cheek a deepening red
Told where the feverish hectic fed;
And yet, each fatal token gave
To the mild beauty of her face
A newer and a dearer grace,
Unwarning of the grave.
'T was like the hue which Autumn gives
To yonder changed and dying leaves,
Breathed over by his frosty breath;
Scarce can the gazer feel that this
Is but the spoiler's treacherous kiss,
The mocking-smile of Death!

'Sweet were the tales she used to tell
When summer's eve was dear to us,
And, fading from the darkening dell,
The glory of the sunset fell
On wooded Agamenticus,—

When, sitting by our cottage wall,
The murmur of the Saco's fall,
And the south-wind's expiring sighs,
Came, softly blending, on my ear
With the low tones I loved to hear:
Tales of the pure, the good, the wise,
The holy men and maids of old,
In the all-sacred pages told;
Of Rachel, stooped at Haran's fountains,
Amid her father's thirsty flock,
Beautiful to her kinsman seeming
As the bright angels of his dreaming,
On Padan-aran's holy rock;
Of gentle Ruth, and her who kept
Her awful vigil on the mountains,
By Israel's virgin daughters wept;
Of Miriam, with her maidens, singing
The song for grateful Israel meet,
While every crimson wave was bringing
The spoils of Egypt at her feet;
Of her, Samaria's humble daughter,
Who paused to hear, beside her well,
Lessons of love and truth, which fell
Softly as Shiloh's flowing water;
And saw, beneath His pilgrim guise,
The Promised One, so long foretold
By holy seer and bard of old,
Revealed before her wondering eyes!

'Slowly she faded. Day by day
Her step grew weaker in our hall,
And fainter, at each even-fall,
Her sad voice died away.
Yet on her thin, pale lip, the while,
Sat Resignation's holy smile:
And even my father checked his tread,
And hushed his voice, beside her bed:
Beneath the calm and sad rebuke
Of her meek eye's imploring look,
The scowl of hate his brow forsook,
And in his stern and gloomy eye,
At times, a few unwonted tears
Wet the dark lashes, which for years
Hatred and pride had kept so dry.

'Calm as a child to slumber soothed,
As if an angel's hand had smoothed
The still, white features into rest,
Silent and cold, without a breath
To stir the drapery on her breast,
Pain, with its keen and poisoned fang,
The horror of the mortal pang,
The suffering look her brow had worn,
The fear, the strife, the anguish gone,—
She slept at last in death!

'Oh, tell me, father, *can* the dead
Walk on the earth, and look on us,
And lay upon the living's head
Their blessing or their curse?
For, oh, last night she stood by me,
As I lay beneath the woodland tree!'

The Jesuit crosses himself in awe,—
'Jesu! what was it my daughter saw?'

'*She* came to me last night.
The dried leaves did not feel her tread;
She stood by me in the wan moonlight,
In the white robes of the dead!
Pale, and very mournfully
She bent her light form over me.
I heard no sound, I felt no breath
Breathe o'er me from that face of death:
Its blue eyes rested on my own,
Rayless and cold as eyes of stone;
Yet, in their fixed, unchanging gaze,
Something, which spoke of early days,—
A sadness in their quiet glare,
As if love's smile were frozen there,—
Came o'er me with an icy thrill;
O God! I feel its presence still!'

The Jesuit makes the holy sign,—
'How passed the vision, daughter mine?'

'All dimly in the wan moonshine,
As a wreath of mist will twist and twine,
And scatter, and melt into the light;
So scattering, melting on my sight,
The pale, cold vision passed;
But those sad eyes were fixed on mine
Mournfully to the last.'

'God help thee, daughter, tell me why
That spirit passed before thine eye!'

'Father, I know not, save it be
That deeds of mine have summoned her
From the unbreathing sepulchre,
To leave her last rebuke with me.
Ah, woe for me! my mother died

Just at the moment when I stood
Close on the verge of womanhood,
A child in everything beside;
And when my wild heart needed most
Her gentle counsels, they were lost.

'My father lived a stormy life,
Of frequent change and daily strife;
And—God forgive him! left his child
To feel, like him, a freedom wild;
To love the red man's dwelling-place,
The birch boat on his shaded floods,
The wild excitement of the chase,
Sweeping the ancient woods,
The camp-fire, blazing on the shore
Of the still lakes, the clear stream where
The idle fisher sets his weir,
Or angles in the shade, far more
Than that restraining awe I felt
Beneath my gentle mother's care,
When nightly at her knee I knelt,
With childhood's simple prayer.

'There came a change. The wild, glad mood
Of unchecked freedom passed.
Amid the ancient solitude
Of unshorn grass and waving wood
And waters glancing bright and fast,
A softened voice was in my ear,
Sweet as those lulling sounds and fine
The hunter lifts his head to hear,
Now far and faint, now full and near—
The murmur of the wind-swept pine.
A manly form was ever nigh,
A bold, free hunter, with an eye
Whose dark, keen glance had power to wake
Both fear and love, to awe and charm;
'T was as the wizard rattlesnake,
Whose evil glances lure to harm—
Whose cold and small and glittering eye,
And brilliant coil, and changing dye,
Draw, step by step, the gazer near,
With drooping wing and cry of fear,
Yet powerless all to turn away,
A conscious, but a willing prey!

'Fear, doubt, thought, life itself, erelong
Merged in one feeling deep and strong.
Faded the world which I had known,
A poor vain shadow, cold and waste;
In the warm present bliss alone
Seemed I of actual life to taste.
Fond longings dimly understood,
The glow of passion's quickening blood,
And cherished fantasies which press
The young lip with a dream's caress;
The heart's forecast and prophecy
Took form and life before my eye,
Seen in the glance which met my own,
Heard in the soft and pleading tone,
Felt in the arms around me cast,
And warm heart-pulses beating fast.
Ah! scarcely yet to God above
With deeper trust, with stronger love,
Has prayerful saint his meek heart lent,
Or cloistered nun at twilight bent,
Than I, before a human shrine,
As mortal and as frail as mine,
With heart, and soul, and mind, and form,
Knelt madly to a fellow-worm.

'Full soon, upon that dream of sin,
An awful light came bursting in.
The shrine was cold at which I knelt,
The idol of that shrine was gone;
A humbled thing of shame and guilt,
Outcast, and spurned and lone,
Wrapt in the shadows of my crime,
With withering heart and burning brain,
And tears that fell like fiery rain,
I passed a fearful time.

'There came a voice—it checked the tear,
In heart and soul it wrought a change;
My father's voice was in my ears;
It whispered of revenge!
A new and fiercer feeling swept
All lingering tenderness away;
And tiger passions, which had slept
In childhood's better day,
Unknown, unfelt, arose at length
In all their own demoniac strength.

'A youthful warrior of the wild,
By words deceived, by smiles beguiled,
Of crime the cheated instrument,
Upon our fatal errands went.
Through camp and town and wilderness
He tracked his victim; and at last,
Just when the tide of hate had passed,

And milder thoughts came warm and fast,
Exulting, at my feet he cast
The bloody token of success.

'O God! with what an awful power
I saw the buried past uprise,
And gather, in a single hour,
Its ghost-like memories!
And then I felt, alas! too late,
That underneath the mask of hate,
That shame and guilt and wrong had thrown
O'er feelings which they might not own,
The heart's wild love had known no change;
And still that deep and hidden love,
With its first fondness, wept above
The victim of its own revenge!
There lay the fearful scalp, and there
The blood was on its pale brown hair!
I thought not of the victim's scorn,
I thought not of his baleful guile,
My deadly wrong, my outcast name,
The characters of sin and shame
On heart and forehead drawn;
I only saw that victim's smile,
The still green places where we met,—
The moonlit branches, dewy wet;
I only felt, I only heard,
The greeting and the parting word,—
The smile, the embrace, the tone, which made
An Eden of the forest shade.

'And oh, with what a loathing eye,
With what a deadly hate, and deep,
I saw that Indian murderer lie
Before me, in his drunken sleep!
What though for me the deed was done,
And words of mine had sped him on!
Yet when he murmured, as he slept,
The horrors of that deed of blood,
The tide of utter madness swept
O'er brain and bosom, like a flood,
And, father, with this hand of mine'—
'Ha! what didst thou?' the Jesuit cries,
Shuddering, as smitten with sudden pain,
And shading, with one thin hand, his eyes,
With the other he makes the holy sign.

'—I smote him as I would a worm;
With heart as steeled, with nerves as firm:
He never woke again!'

'Woman of sin and blood and shame,
Speak, I would know that victim's name.'

'Father,' she gasped, 'a chieftain, known
As Saco's Sachem,—Mogg Megone!'

Pale priest! What proud and lofty dreams,[94]
What keen desires, what cherished schemes,
What hopes, that time may not recall,
Are darkened by that chieftain's fall!
Was he not pledged, by cross and vow,
To lift the hatchet of his sire,
And, round his own, the Church's foe,
To light the avenging fire?
Who now the Tarrantine shall wake,
For thine and for the Church's sake?
Who summon to the scene
Of conquest and unsparing strife,
And vengeance dearer than his life,
The fiery-souled Castine?
Three backward steps the Jesuit takes,
His long, thin frame as ague shakes;
And loathing hate is in his eye,
As from his lips these words of fear
Fall hoarsely on the maiden's ear,—
'The soul that sinneth shall surely die!'

She stands, as stands the stricken deer,
Checked midway in the fearful chase,
When bursts, upon his eye and ear,
The gaunt, gray robber, baying near,
Between him and his hiding-place;
While still behind, with yell and blow,
Sweeps, like a storm, the coming foe.
'Save me, O holy man!' her cry
Fills all the void, as if a tongue
Unseen, from rib and rafter hung,
Thrilling with mortal agony;
Her hands are clasping the Jesuit's knee,
And her eye looks fearfully into his own;—
'Off, woman of sin! nay, touch not me
With the fingers of blood; begone!'
With a gesture of horror, he spurns the form
That writhes at his feet like a trodden worm.

Ever thus the spirit must,
Guilty in the sight of Heaven,
With a keener woe be riven,
For its weak and sinful trust
In the strength of human dust;
And its anguish thrill afresh,
For each vain reliance given
To the failing arm of flesh.

PART III.

Ah, weary priest! with pale hands pressed
On thy throbbing brow of pain,
Baffled in thy life-long quest,
Overworn with toiling vain,
How ill thy troubled musings fit
The holy quiet of a breast
With the Dove of Peace at rest,
Sweetly brooding over it.
Thoughts are thine which have no part
With the meek and pure of heart,
Undisturbed by outward things,
Resting in the heavenly shade,
By the overspreading wings
Of the Blessed Spirit made.
Thoughts of strife and hate and wrong
Sweep thy heated brain along,
Fading hopes for whose success
It were sin to breathe a prayer;—
Schemes which Heaven may never bless,—
Fears which darken to despair.
Hoary priest! thy dream is done
Of a hundred red tribes won
To the pale of Holy Church;
And the heretic o'erthrown,
And his name no longer known,
And thy weary brethren turning,
Joyful from their years of mourning
'Twixt the altar and the porch.
Hark! what sudden sound is heard
In the wood and in the sky,
Shriller than the scream of bird,
Than the trumpet's clang more high!
Every wolf-cave of the hills,
Forest arch and mountain gorge,
Rock and dell, and river verge,
With an answering echo thrills.
Well does the Jesuit know that cry,
Which summons the Norridgewock to die,
And tells that the foe of his flock is nigh.
He listens, and hears the rangers come,
With loud hurrah, and jar of drum,
And hurrying feet (for the chase is hot),
And the short, sharp sound of rifle shot,
And taunt and menace,—answered well
By the Indians' mocking cry and yell,—
The bark of dogs,—the squaw's mad scream,
The dash of paddles along the stream,
The whistle of shot as it cuts the leaves
Of the maples around the church's eaves,
And the gride of hatchets fiercely thrown
On wigwam-log and tree and stone.
Black with the grime of paint and dust,
Spotted and streaked with human gore,
A grim and naked head is thrust
Within the chapel-door.
'Ha—Bomazeen! In God's name say,
What mean these sounds of bloody fray?'
Silent, the Indian points his hand
To where across the echoing glen
Sweep Harmon's dreaded ranger-band,
And Moulton with his men.
'Where are thy warriors, Bomazeen?
Where are De Rouville and Castine,[95]
And where the braves of Sawga's queen?'
'Let my father find the winter snow
Which the sun drank up long moons ago!
Under the falls of Tacconock,
The wolves are eating the Norridgewock;
Castine with his wives lies closely hid
Like a fox in the woods of Pemaquid!
On Sawga's banks the man of war
Sits in his wigwam like a squaw;
Squando has fled, and Mogg Megone,
Struck by the knife of Sagamore John,
Lies stiff and stark and cold as a stone.'

Fearfully over the Jesuit's face,
Of a thousand thoughts, trace after trace,
Like swift cloud-shadows, each other chase.
One instant, his fingers grasp his knife,
For a last vain struggle for cherished life,—
The next, he hurls the blade away,
And kneels at his altar's foot to pray;
Over his beads his fingers stray,
And he kisses the cross, and calls aloud
On the Virgin and her Son;
For terrible thoughts his memory crowd
Of evil seen and done,

Of scalps brought home by his savage flock
From Casco and Sawga and Sagadahock
In the Church's service won.

No shrift the gloomy savage brooks,
As scowling on the priest he looks:
'Cowesass?—cowesass?—tawhich wessa-seen?[96]
Let my father look upon Bomazeen,—
My father's heart is the heart of a squaw,
But mine is so hard that it does not thaw;
Let my father ask his God to make
A dance and a feast for a great saga-more,
When he paddles across the western lake,
With his dogs and his squaws to the spirit's shore.
Cowesass?—cowesass?—tawhich wessa-seen?
Let my father die like Bomazeen!'

Through the chapel's narrow doors,
And through each window in the walls,
Round the priest and warrior pours
The deadly shower of English balls.
Low on his cross the Jesuit falls;
While at his side the Norridgewock,
With failing breath, essays to mock
And menace yet the hated foe,
Shakes his scalp-trophies to and fro
Exultingly before their eyes,
Till, cleft and torn by shot and blow,
Defiant still, he dies.

'So fare all eaters of the frog!
Death to the Babylonish dog!
Down with the beast of Rome!'
With shouts like these, around the dead,
Unconscious on his bloody bed,
The rangers crowding come.
Brave men! the dead priest cannot hear
The unfeeling taunt,—the brutal jeer;
Spurn—for he sees ye not—in wrath,
The symbol of your Saviour's death;
Tear from his death-grasp, in your zeal,
And trample, as a thing accursed,
The cross he cherished in the dust:
The dead man cannot feel!

Brutal alike in deed and word,
With callous heart and hand of strife,
How like a fiend may man be made,
Plying the foul and monstrous trade
Whose harvest-field is human life,
Whose sickle is the reeking sword!
Quenching, with reckless hand in blood,
Sparks kindled by the breath of God;
Urging the deathless soul, unshriven,
Of open guilt or secret sin,
Before the bar of that pure Heaven
The holy only enter in!
Oh, by the widow's sore distress,
The orphan's wailing wretchedness,
By Virtue struggling in the accursed
Embraces of polluting Lust,
By the fell discord of the Pit,
And the pained souls that people it,
And by the blessed peace which fills
The Paradise of God forever,
Resting on all its holy hills,
And flowing with its crystal river,—
Let Christian hands no longer bear
In triumph on his crimson car
The foul and idol god of war;
No more the purple wreaths prepare
To bind amid his snaky hair;
Nor Christian bards his glories tell,
Nor Christian tongues his praises swell.

Through the gun-smoke wreathing white,
Glimpses on the soldier's sight
A thing of human shape I ween,
For a moment only seen,
With its loose hair backward streaming,
And its eyeballs madly gleaming,
Shrieking, like a soul in pain,
From the world of light and breath,
Hurrying to its place again,
Spectre-like it vanisheth!

Wretched girl! one eye alone
Notes the way which thou hast gone.
That great Eye, which slumbers never,
Watching o'er a lost world ever,
Tracks thee over vale and mountain,
By the gushing forest-fountain,
Plucking from the vine its fruit,
Searching for the ground-nut's root,
Peering in the she-wolf's den,
Wading through the marshy fen,
Where the sluggish water-snake
Basks beside the sunny brake,

Coiling in his slimy bed,
Smooth and cold against thy tread;
Purposeless, thy mazy way
Threading through the lingering day,
And at night securely sleeping
Where the dogwood's dews are weeping!
Still, though earth and man discard thee,
Doth thy Heavenly Father guard thee:
He who spared the guilty Cain,
Even when a brother's blood,
Crying in the ear of God,
Gave the earth its primal stain;
He whose mercy ever liveth,
Who repenting guilt forgiveth,
And the broken heart receiveth;
Wanderer of the wilderness,
Haunted, guilty, crazed and wild,
He regardeth thy distress,
And careth for His sinful child!

'T is springtime on the eastern hills!
Like torrents gush the summer rills;
Through winter's moss and dry dead leaves
The bladed grass revives and lives,
Pushes the mouldering waste away,
For glimpses to the April day.
In kindly shower and sunshine bud
The branches of the dull gray wood;
Out from its sunned and sheltered nooks
The blue eye of the violet looks;
The southwest wind is warmly blowing,
And odors from the springing grass,
The pine-tree and the sassafras,
Are with it on its errands going.

A band is marching through the wood
Where rolls the Kennebec his flood;
The warriors of the wilderness,
Painted, and in their battle dress;
And with them one whose bearded cheek,
And white and wrinkled brow, bespeak
A wanderer from the shores of France.
A few long locks of scattering snow
Beneath a battered morion flow,
And from the rivets of the vest
Which girds in steel his ample breast,
The slanted sunbeams glance.
In the harsh outlines of his face
Passion and sin have left their trace;
Yet, save worn brow and thin gray hair,
No signs of weary age are there.

His step is firm, his eye is keen,
Nor years in broil and battle spent,
Nor toil, nor wounds, nor pain have bent
The lordly frame of old Castine.

No purpose now of strife and blood
Urges the hoary veteran on:
The fire of conquest and the mood
Of chivalry have gone.
A mournful task is his,—to lay
Within the earth the bones of those
Who perished in that fearful day,
When Norridgewock became the prey
Of all unsparing foes.
Sadly and still, dark thoughts between,
Of coming vengeance mused Castine,
Of the fallen chieftain Bomazeen,
Who bade for him the Norridgewocks
Dig up their buried tomahawks
For firm defence or swift attack;
And him whose friendship formed the tie
Which held the stern self-exile back
From lapsing into savagery;
Whose garb and tone and kindly glance
Recalled a younger, happier day,
And prompted memory's fond essay,
To bridge the mighty waste which lay
Between his wild home and that gray,
Tall chateau of his native France:
Whose chapel bell, with far-heard din,
Ushered his birth-hour gayly in,
And counted with its solemn toll
The masses for his father's soul.

Hark! from the foremost of the band
Suddenly bursts the Indian yell;
For now on the very spot they stand
Where the Norridgewocks fighting fell.
No wigwam smoke is curling there;
The very earth is scorched and bare:
And they pause and listen to catch a sound
Of breathing life,—but there comes not one.
Save the fox's bark and the rabbit's bound;
But here and there, on the blackened ground,
White bones are glistening in the sun.
And where the house of prayer arose,
And the holy hymn, at daylight's close,
And the aged priest stood up to bless
The children of the wilderness,

There is naught save ashes sodden and dank;
And the birchen boats of the Norridgewock,
Tethered to tree and stump and rock
Rotting along the river bank!

Blessed Mary! who is she
Leaning against that maple-tree?
The sun upon her face burns hot,
But the fixed eyelid moveth not;
The squirrel's chirp is shrill and clear
From the dry bough above her ear;
Dashing from rock and root its spray,
Close at her feet the river rushes;
The blackbird's wing against her brushes,
And sweetly through the hazel-bushes
The robin's mellow music gushes;
God save her! will she sleep alway?

Castine hath bent him over the sleeper:
'Wake, daughter,—wake!' but she stirs no limb:
The eye that looks on him is fixed and dim;
And the sleep she is sleeping shall be no deeper,
Until the angel's oath is said,
And the final blast of the trump goes forth
To the graves of the sea and the graves of earth.
Ruth Boniton is dead!

1834.

THE PAST AND COMING YEAR.

Wave of an awful torrent, thronging down,
With all the wealth of centuries, and the cold
Embraces of eternity, o'erstrown
With the great wrecks of empire, and the old
Magnificence of nations, who are gone;
Thy last, faint murmur—thy departing sigh,
Along the shore of being, like a tone
Thrilling on broken harp-strings, or the swell
Of the chained winds' last whisper, hath gone by,
And thou hast floated from the world of breath
To the still guidance of o'ermastering Death,
Thy pilot to eternity. Farewell!

Go, swell the throngful past. Go, blend with all
The garnered things of Death; and bear with thee
The treasures of thy pilgrimage, the tall
And beautiful dreams of Hope, the ministry
Of Love and high Ambition. Man remains
To dream again as idly; and the stains
Of passion will be visible once more.
The winged spirit will not be confined
By the experience of thy journey. Mind
Will struggle in its prison-house, and still,
With Earth's strong fetters binding it to ill,
Unfurl the pinions fitted but to soar
In that pure atmosphere, where spirits range—
The home of high existences—where change.
And blighting may not enter. Love again
Will bloom, a fickle flower, upon the grave
Of old affections; and Ambition wave
His eagle-plume most proudly, for the rein
Of Conscience will be loosened from the soul
To give his purpose freedom. The control
Of reason will be changeful, and the ties
Which gather hearts together, and make up
The romance of existence, will be rent:
Yea, poison will be poured in Friendship's cup;
And for Earth's low familiar element,
Even Love itself forsake its kindred skies.

But not alone dark visions! happier things
Will float above existence, like the wings

Of the starred bird of paradise; and Love
Will not be all a dream, or rather prove
A dream—a sweet forgetfulness—that hath
No wakeful changes, ending but in Death.
Yea, pure hearts shall be pledged beneath the eyes
Of the beholding heaven, and in the light
Of the love-hallowed moon. The quiet Night
Shall hear that language underneath the skies
Which whispereth above them, as the prayer
And the deep vow are spoken. Passing fair
And gifted creatures, with the light of truth
And undebarred affection, as a crown,
Resting upon the beautiful brow of youth,
Shall smile on stately manhood, kneeling down
Before them, as to Idols. Friendship's hand
Shall clasp its brother's; and Affection's tear
Be sanctified with sympathy. The bier
Of stricken love shall lose the fears, which Death
Giveth his awful work, and earnest Faith
Shall look beyond the shadow of the clay,
The pulseless sepulchre, the cold decay;
And to the quiet of the spirit-land
Follow the mourned and lovely. Gifted ones
Lighting the Heaven of Intellect, like suns,
Shall wrestle well with circumstance, and bear
The agony of scorn, the preying care,
Wedded to burning bosoms; and go down
In sorrow to the noteless sepulchre,
With one lone hope embracing like a crown
The cold and death-like forehead of Despair,
That after times shall treasure up their fame
Even as a proud inheritance and high;
And beautiful beings love to breathe their name
With the recorded things that never die.
And thou, gray voyager to the breezeless sea
Of infinite Oblivion—speed thou on;
Another gift of time succeedeth thee
Fresh from the hand of God; for thou hast done
The errand of thy destiny; and none
May dream of thy returning. Go, and bear
Mortality's frail records to thy cold,
Eternal prison-house; the midnight prayer
Of suffering bosoms, and the fevered care
Of worldly hearts; the miser's dream of gold;
Ambition's grasp at greatness; the quenched light
Of broken spirits; the forgiven wrong
And the abiding curse—ay, bear along
These wrecks of thy own making. Lo, thy knell
Gathers upon the windy breath of night,
Its last and faintest echo. Fare thee well!

1829.

THE MISSIONARY.

'It is an awful, an arduous thing to root out every affection for earthly things, so as to live only for another world. I am now far, very far, from you all; and as often as I look around and see the Indian scenery, I sigh to think of the distance which separates us.'—*Letters of Henry Martyn, from India.*

'Say, whose is this fair picture, which the light
From the unshutter'd window rests upon
Even as a lingering halo? Beautiful!
The keen, fine eye of manhood, and a lip
Lovely as that of Hylas, and impressed
With the bright signet of some brilliant thought;
That broad expanse of forehead, clear and high,
Marked visibly with the characters of mind,
And the free locks around it, raven black,
Luxuriant and unsilver'd!—who was he?'

A friend, a more than brother. In the spring
And glory of his being he went forth
From the embraces of devoted friends,
From ease and quiet happiness, from more—
From the warm heart that loved him with a love
Holier than earthly passion, and to whom
The beauty of his spirit shone above
The charms of perishing nature. He went forth
Strengthened to suffer, gifted to subdue
The might of human passion, to pass on
Quietly to the sacrifice of all
The lofty hopes of boyhood, and to turn
The high ambition written on that brow,
From its first dream of power and human fame,
Unto a task of seeming lowliness,
Yet God-like in its purpose. He went forth
To bind the broken spirit, to pluck back
The heathen from the wheel of Juggernaut;
To place the spiritual image of a God
Holy and just and true, before the eye
Of the dark-minded Brahmin, and unseal
The holy pages of the Book of Life,
Fraught with sublimer mysteries than all
The sacred tomes of Vedas, to unbind
The widow from her sacrifice, and save
The perishing infant from the worshipped river!

'And, lady, where is he?' He slumbers well
Beneath the shadow of an Indian palm.
There is no stone above his grave. The wind,
Hot from the desert, as it stirs the leaves
Heavy and long above him, sighs alone
Over his place of slumber.

'God forbid
That he should die alone!' Nay, not alone.
His God was with him in that last dread hour;
His great arm underneath him, and His smile
Melting into a spirit full of peace.
And one kind friend, a human friend, was near—
One whom his teachings and his earnest prayers
Had snatch'd as from the burning. He alone
Felt the last pressure of his failing hand,
Caught the last glimpse of his closing eye,
And laid the green turf over him with tears,
And left him with his God.

'And was it well,
Dear lady, that this noble mind should cast
Its rich gifts on the waters? That a heart
Full of all gentleness and truth and love
Should wither on the suicidal shrine
Of a mistaken duty? If I read
Aright the fine intelligence which fills
That amplitude of brow, and gazes out
Like an indwelling spirit from that eye,
He might have borne him loftily among
The proudest of his land, and with a step
Unfaltering ever, steadfast and secure,
Gone up the paths of greatness,—bearing still
A sister spirit with him, as some star,
Preëminent in Heaven, leads steadily up
A kindred watcher, with its fainter beams
Baptized in its great glory. Was it well
That all this promise of the heart and mind
Should perish from the earth, and leave no trace,
Unfolding like the Cereus of the clime
Which hath its sepulchre, but in the night
Of pagan desolation—was it well?'

Thy will be done, O Father!—it *was* well.
What are the honors of a perishing world
Grasp'd by a palsied finger? the applause
Of the unthoughtful multitude which greets
The dull ear of decay? the wealth that loads
The bier with costly drapery, and shines

In tinsel on the coffin, and builds up
The cold substantial monument? Can these
Bear up the sinking spirit in that hour
When heart and flesh are failing, and the grave
Is opening under us? Oh, dearer then
The memory of a kind deed done to him
Who was our enemy, one grateful tear
In the meek eye of virtuous suffering,
One smile call'd up by unseen charity
On the wan lips of hunger, or one prayer
Breathed from the bosom of the penitent—
The stain'd with crime and outcast, unto whom
Our mild rebuke and tenderness of love
A merciful God hath bless'd.

'But, lady, say,
Did he not sometimes almost sink beneath
The burden of his toil, and turn aside
To weep above his sacrifice, and cast
A sorrowing glance upon his childhood's home,
Still green in memory? Clung not to his heart
Something of earthly hope uncrucified,
Of earthly thought unchastened? Did he bring
Life's warm affections to the sacrifice—
Its loves, hopes, sorrows—and become as one
Knowing no kindred but a perishing world,
No love but of the sin-endangered soul,
No hope but of the winning back to life
Of the dead nations, and no passing thought
Save of the errand wherewith he was sent
As to a martyrdom?'

Nay, though the heart
Be consecrated to the holiest work
Vouchsafed to mortal effort, there will be
Ties of the earth around it, and, through all
Its perilous devotion, it must keep
Its own humanity. And it is well.
Else why wept He, who with our nature veiled
The spirit of a God, o'er lost Jerusalem,
And the cold grave of Lazarus? And why
In the dim garden rose His earnest prayer,
That from His lips the cup of suffering
Might pass, if it were possible?

My friend
Was of a gentle nature, and his heart
Gushed like a river-fountain of the hills,
Ceaseless and lavish, at a kindly smile,
A word of welcome, or a tone of love.
Freely his letters to his friends disclosed
His yearnings for the quiet haunts of home,
For love and its companionship, and all
The blessings left behind him; yet above
Its sorrows and its clouds his spirit rose,
Tearful and yet triumphant, taking hold
Of the eternal promises of God,
And steadfast in its faith.

Here are some lines
Penned in his lonely mission-house and sent
To a dear friend at home who even now
Lingers above them with a mournful joy,
Holding them well-nigh sacred as a leaf
Plucked from the record of a breaking heart.

EVENING IN BURMAH.

A night of wonder! piled afar
With ebon feet and crests of snow,
Like Himalaya's peaks, which bar
The sunset and the sunset's star
From half the shadowed vale below,
Volumed and vast the dense clouds lie,
And over them, and down the sky,
Paled in the moon, the lightnings go.

And what a strength of light and shade
Is chequering all the earth below!
And, through the jungle's verdant braid,
Of tangled vine and wild reed made,
What blossoms in the moonlight glow!
The Indian rose's loveliness,
The ceiba with its crimson dress,
The twining myrtle dropped with snow.

And flitting in the fragrant air,
Or nestling in the shadowy trees,
A thousand bright-hued birds are there—
Strange plumage, quivering wild and rare,
With every faintly breathing breeze;
And, wet with dew from roses shed,
The bulbul droops her weary head,
Forgetful of her melodies.

Uprising from the orange-leaves,
The tall pagoda's turrets glow;
O'er graceful shaft and fretted eaves,
Its verdant web the myrtle weaves,
And hangs in flowering wreaths below;
And where the clustered palms eclipse
The moonbeams, from its marble lips
The fountain's silver waters flow.

Strange beauty fills the earth and air,
The fragrant grove and flowering tree,
And yet my thoughts are wandering where
My native rocks lie bleak and bare,
A weary way beyond the sea.
The yearning spirit is not here;
It lingers on a spot more dear
Than India's brightest bowers to me.

Methinks I tread the well-known street—
The tree my childhood loved is there,
Its bare-worn roots are at my feet,
And through its open boughs I meet
White glimpses of the place of prayer;
And unforgotten eyes again
Are glancing through the cottage pane,
Than Asia's lustrous eyes more fair.

Oh, holy haunts! oh, childhood's home!
Where, now, my wandering heart, is thine?
Here, where the dusky heathen come
To bow before the deaf and dumb,
Dead idols of their own design;
Where in their worshipped river's tide
The infant sinks, and on its side
The widow's funeral altars shine!

Here, where, mid light and song and flowers,
The priceless soul in ruin lies;
Lost, dead to all those better powers
Which link this fallen world of ours
To God's clear-shining Paradise;
And wrong and shame and hideous crime
Are like the foliage of their clime,
The unshorn growth of centuries!

Turn, then, my heart; thy home is here;
No other now remains for thee:
The smile of love, and friendship's tear,
The tones that melted on thine ear,
The mutual thrill of sympathy,
The welcome of the household band,
The pressure of the lip and hand,
Thou mayst not hear, nor feel, nor see.

God of my spirit! Thou, alone,
Who watchest o'er my pillowed head,
Whose ear is open to the moan
And sorrowing of Thy child, hast known
The grief which at my heart has fed;
The struggle of my soul to rise
Above its earth-born sympathies;
The tears of many a sleepless bed!

Oh! be Thine arm, as it hath been,
In every test of heart and faith,—
The tempter's doubt, the wiles of men,
The heathen's scoff, the bosom sin,—
A helper and a stay beneath;
A strength in weakness, through the strife
And anguish of my wasting life—
My solace and my hope, in death!

1833.

MASSACHUSETTS.

Written on hearing that the Resolutions of the Legislature of Massachusetts on the subject of Slavery, presented by Hon. C. Cushing to the House of Representatives of the United States [in 1837] had been laid on the table unread and unreferred, under the infamous rule of 'Patton's Resolution.'

And have they spurned thy word,
Thou of the old Thirteen!
Whose soil, where Freedom's blood first poured,
Hath yet a darker green?
To outworn patience suffering long
Is insult added to the wrong?

And have they closed thy mouth,
And fixed the padlock fast?
Dumb as the black slave of the South!
Is this thy fate at last?
Oh shame! thy honored seal and sign
Trod under hoofs so asinine!

Call from the Capitol
Thy chosen ones again,
Unmeet for them the base control
Of Slavery's curbing rein!
Unmeet for men like them to feel
The spurring of a rider's heel.

When votes are things of trade
And force is argument,
Call back to Quincy's shade
Thy old man eloquent.
Why leave him longer striving thus
With the wild beasts of Ephesus?

Back from the Capitol—
It is no place for thee!
Beneath the arch of Heaven's blue wall,
Thy voice may still be free!
What power shall chain thy utterance there,
In God's free sun and freer air?

A voice is calling thee,
From all the martyr graves
Of those stern men, in death made free,
Who could not live as slaves.

The slumberings of thy honored dead
Are for thy sake disquieted.

So let thy Faneuil Hall
By freemen's feet be trod,
And give the echoes of its wall
Once more to Freedom's God!
And in the midst unseen shall stand
The mighty fathers of thy land.

Thy gathered sons shall feel
The soul of Adams near,
And Otis with his fiery zeal,
And Warren's onward cheer;
And heart to heart shall thrill as when
They moved and spake as living men.

Not on Potomac's side,
With treason in thy rear,
Can Freedom's holy cause be tried:
Not there, my State, but here.
Here must thy needed work be done,
The battle at thy hearth-stone won.

Proclaim a new crusade
Against the foes within;
From bar and pulpit, press and trade,
Cast out the shame and sin.
Then speak thy now-unheeded word,
Its lightest whisper shall be heard.

1837.

II. Poems printed in the 'Life of Whittier'

THE HOME-COMING OF THE BRIDE.

[The home of Sarah Greenleaf was upon the Newbury shore of the Merrimac, nearly opposite the home of the Whittiers. The house was standing until a recent date. Among Mr. Whittier's papers was found the following fragment of a ballad about the home-coming, as a bride, of his grandmother, Sarah Greenleaf.]

SARAH GREENLEAF, of eighteen years,
Stepped lightly her bridegroom's boat within,
Waving mid-river, through smiles and tears,
A farewell back to her kith and kin.
With her sweet blue eyes and her new gold gown,
She sat by her stalwart lover's side—
Oh, never was brought to Haverhill town
By land or water so fair a bride.
Glad as the glad autumnal weather,
The Indian summer so soft and warm,
They walked through the golden woods together,
His arm the girdle about her form.

They passed the dam and the gray grist-mill,
Whose walls with the jar of grinding shook,
And crossed, for the moment awed and still,
The haunted bridge of the Country Brook.
The great oaks seemed on Job's Hill crown
To wave in welcome their branches strong,
And an upland streamlet came rippling down
Over root and rock, like a bridal song.
And lo! in the midst of a clearing stood
The rough-built farmhouse, low and lone,
While all about it the unhewn wood
Seemed drawing closer to claim its own.

But the red apples dropped from orchard trees,
The red cock crowed on the low fence rail,
From the garden hives came the sound of bees,
On the barn floor pealed the smiting flail.

. . . . . .

THE SONG OF THE VERMONTERS, 1779.

[Written during school-days, and published anonymously in 1833. The secret of authorship was not discovered for sixty years.]

Ho—all to the borders! Vermonters, come down,
With your breeches of deerskin and jackets of brown;
With your red woollen caps, and your moccasins, come,
To the gathering summons of trumpet and drum.

Come down with your rifles! Let gray wolf and fox
Howl on in the shade of their primitive rocks;
Let the bear feed securely from pig-pen and stall;
Here's two-legged game for your powder and ball.

On our south came the Dutchmen, enveloped in grease;
And arming for battle while canting of peace;
On our east, crafty Meshech has gathered his band
To hang up our leaders and eat up our land.

Ho—all to the rescue! For Satan shall work
No gain for his legions of Hampshire and York!
They claim our possessions—the pitiful knaves—
The tribute we pay shall be prisons and graves!

Let Clinton and Ten Broek, with bribes in their hands,
Still seek to divide and parcel our lands;
We've coats for our traitors, whoever they are;
The warp is of feathers—the filling of tar:

Does the 'old Bay State' threaten? Does Congress complain?
Swarms Hampshire in arms on our borders again?
Bark the war-dogs of Britain aloud on the lake—
Let 'em come; what they can they are welcome to take.

What seek they among us? The pride of our wealth
Is comfort, contentment, and labor, and health,
And lands which, as Freemen, we only have trod,
Independent of all, save the mercies of God.

Yet we owe no allegiance, we bow to no throne,
Our ruler is law, and the law is our own;
Our leaders themselves are our own fellow-men,
Who can handle the sword, or the scythe, or the pen.

Our wives are all true, and our daughters are fair,
With their blue eyes of smiles and their light flowing hair,
All brisk at their wheels till the dark even-fall,
Then blithe at the sleigh-ride, the husking, and ball!

We've sheep on the hillsides, we've cows on the plain,
And gay-tasselled corn-fields and rank-growing grain;
There are deer on the mountains, and wood-pigeons fly
From the crack of our muskets, like clouds on the sky.

And there's fish in our streamlets and rivers which take
Their course from the hills to our broad bosomed lake;
Through rock-arched Winooski the salmon leaps free,
And the portly shad follows all fresh from the sea.

Like a sunbeam the pickerel glides through the pool,
And the spotted trout sleeps where the water is cool,
Or darts from his shelter of rock and of root
At the beaver's quick plunge, or the angler's pursuit.

And ours are the mountains, which awfully rise,
Till they rest their green heads on the blue of the skies;
And ours are the forests unwasted, unshorn,
Save where the wild path of the tempest is torn.

And though savage and wild be this climate of ours,
And brief be our season of fruits and of flowers,
Far dearer the blast round our mountains which raves,
Than the sweet summer zephyr which breathes over slaves!

Hurrah for Vermont! For the land which we till
Must have sons to defend her from valley and hill;
Leave the harvest to rot on the fields where it grows,
And the reaping of wheat for the reaping of foes.

From far Michiscom's wild valley, to where
Poosoonsuck steals down from his wood-circled lair,
From Shoticook River to Lutterlock town—
Ho—all to the rescue! Vermonters, come down!

Come York or come Hampshire, come traitors or knaves,
If ye rule o'er our land, ye shall rule o'er our graves;
Our vow is recorded—our banner unfurled,
In the name of Vermont we defy all the world!

1828.

TO A POETICAL TRIO IN THE CITY OF GOTHAM.

[This *jeu d'esprit* was written by Whittier in 1832. The notes are his own. The authorship was not discovered till after his death.]

Three wise men of Gotham
Went to sea in a bowl.

BARDS of the island city!—where of old
The Dutchman smoked beneath his favorite tree,
And the wild eyes of Indian hunters rolled
On Hudson plunging in the Tappaan Zee,
Scene of Stuyvesant's might and chivalry,
And Knickerbocker's fame,—I have made bold
To come before ye, at the present time,
And *reason* with ye in the way of *rhyme*.

Time was when poets kept the quiet tenor
Of their green pathway through th' Arcadian vale,—
Chiming their music in the low sweet manner
Of song-birds warbling to the 'Soft South' gale;
Wooing the Muse where gentle zephyrs fan her,
Where all is peace and earth may not assail;
Telling of lutes and flowers, of love and fear,
Of shepherds, sheep and lambs, and 'such small deer.'

But ye! lost recreants—straying from the green
And pleasant vista of your early time,
With broken lutes and crownless skulls—are seen
Spattering your neighbors with abhorrent slime
Of the low world's pollution[1]! Ye have been
So long apostates from the Heaven of rhyme,
That of the Muses, every mother's daughter
Blushes to own such graceless bards e'er sought her.

'*Hurrah for Jackson!*' is the music now
Which your cracked lutes have learned alone to utter,
As, crouching in Corruption's shadow low,
Ye daily sweep them for your bread and butter[2],

[1] Editors of the *Mercantile Advertiser* and the *Evening Post* in New York,—the present organs of Jacksonism.

[2] Perhaps, after all, they get something better; inasmuch as the Heroites have for some time had exclusive possession of the hall of St.

Cheered by the applauses of the friends who show
Their heads above the offal of the gutter,
And, like the trees which Orpheus moved at will,
Reel, as in token of your matchless skill!

Thou son of Scotia[1]!—nursed beside the grave
Of the proud peasant-minstrel, and to whom
The wild muse of thy mountain-dwelling gave
A portion of its spirit,—if the tomb
Could burst its silence, o'er the Atlantic's wave,
To thee his voice of stern rebuke would come,
Who dared to waken with a master's hand
The lyre of freedom in a fettered land.

And thou!—once treading firmly the proud deck
O'er which thy country's honored flag was sleeping,
Calmly in peace, or to the hostile beck
Of coming foes in starry splendor sweeping,—
Thy graphic tales of battle or of wreck,
Or lone night-watch in middle ocean keeping,
Have made thy 'Leisure Hours' more prized by far
Than those now spent in Party's wordy war[2].

And last, not least, thou!—now nurtured in the land
Where thy bold-hearted fathers long ago
Rocked Freedom's cradle, till its infant hand
Strangled the serpent fierceness of its foe,—
Thou, whose clear brow in early time was fanned
By the soft airs which from Castalia flow[3]!—
Where art thou now? feeding with hickory ladle
The curs of Faction with thy daily twaddle!

Men have looked up to thee, as one to be
A portion of our glory; and the light
And fairy hands of woman beckoned thee
On to thy laurel guerdon; and those bright
And gifted spirits, whom the broad blue sea
Hath shut from thy communion, bid thee, '*Write*,'
Like John of Patmos. Is all this forgotten,
For Yankee brawls and Carolina cotton?

Are autumn's rainbow hues no longer seen?
Flows the 'Green River' through its vale no more?
Steals not thy 'Rivulet' by its banks of green?
Wheels upward from its dark and sedgy shore
Thy 'Water Fowl' no longer?—that the mean
And vulgar strife, the ranting and the *roar*

Tammany, and we have the authority of Halleck that

'There's a barrel of porter in Tammany hall
And the Bucktails are swigging it all the night long.'

[1] James Lawson, Esq., of the *Mercantile*. A fine, warm-hearted Scotchman, who, having unfortunately blundered into Jacksonism, is wondering 'how I' the Deil's name' he got there. He is the author of a volume entitled *Tales and Sketches*, and of the tragedy of *Giordano*.

[2] William Leggett, Esq., of the *Post*, a gentleman of good talents, favorably known as the editor of the *New York Critic*, etc.

[3] William C. Bryant, Esq., well known to the public at large as a poet of acknowledged excellence; and as a very dull editor to the people of New York.

Extempore, like Bottom's should be thine,—
Thou feeblest truck-horse in the Hero's line!

Lost trio!—turn ye to the minstrel pride
Of classic Britain. Even effeminate Moore
Has cast the wine-cup and the lute aside
For Erin and O'Connell; and before
His country's altar, Bulwer breasts the tide
Of old oppression. Sadly brooding o'er
The fate of heroes struggling to be free,
Even Campbell speaks for Poland. *Where are ye?*

Hirelings of traitors! know ye not that men
Are rousing up around ye to retrieve
Our country's honor, which too long has been
Debased by those for whom ye daily weave
Your web of fustian; that from tongue and pen
Of those who o'er our tarnished honor grieve,
Of the pure-hearted and the gifted, come
Hourly the tokens of your master's doom?

Turn from their ruin! Dash your chains aside!
Stand up like men for Liberty and Law,
And free opinion. Check Corruption's pride,
Soothe the loud storm of fratricidal war,—
And the bright honors of your eventide
Shall share the glory which your morning saw;
The patriot's heart shall gladden at your name,
Ye shall be blessed with, and not 'damned to fame'!

ALBUM VERSES.

[Written in the album of May Pillsbury of West Newbury, in the fall of 1838, when Whittier was at home on a visit from Philadelphia, where he was engaged in editorial work.]

PARDON a stranger hand that gives
Its impress to these gilded leaves.
As one who graves in idle mood
An idler's name on rock or wood,
So in a careless hour I claim
A page to leave my humble name.
Accept it; and when o'er my head
A Pennsylvanian sky is spread,
And but in dreams my eye looks back
On broad and lovely Merrimac,
And on my ear no longer breaks
The murmuring music which it makes,
When but in dreams I look again
On Salisbury beach—Grasshopper plain—
Or Powow stream—or Amesbury mills,
Or old Crane neck, or Pipestave hills,
Think of me then as one who keeps,
Where Delaware's broad current sweeps,
And down its rugged limestone-bed
The Schuylkill's arrowy flight is sped,
Deep in his heart the scenes which grace
And glorify his 'native place';
Loves every spot to childhood dear,
And leaves his heart 'untraveled' here;
Longs, midst the Dutchman's kraut and greens,
For pumpkin-pie and pork and beans,
And sighs to think when, sweetly near,
The soft piano greets his ear,
That the fair hands which, small and white,
Glance on its ivory polished light,
Have ne'er an Indian pudding made,
Nor fashioned rye and Indian bread.
And oh! whene'er his footsteps turn,
Whatever stars above him burn,
Though dwelling where a Yankee's name
Is coupled with reproach or shame,
Still true to his New England birth,
Still faithful to his home and hearth,
Even 'midst the scornful stranger band
His boast shall be of YANKEE LAND.

WHAT STATE STREET SAID TO SOUTH CAROLINA, AND WHAT SOUTH CAROLINA SAID TO STATE STREET.

[Published in *The National Era*, May 22, 1851.]

MUTTERING 'fine upland staple,' 'prime Sea Island finer,'
With cotton bales pictured on either retina,
'Your pardon!' said State Street to South Carolina;
'We feel and acknowledge your laws are diviner
Than any promulgated by the thunders of Sinai!
Sorely pricked in the sensitive conscience of business
We own and repent of our sins of remissness:
Our honor we've yielded, our words we have swallowed;
And quenching the lights which our forefathers followed,
And turning from graves by their memories hallowed,
With teeth on ball-cartridge, and finger on trigger,
Reversed Boston Notions, and sent back a nigger!'

'Get away!' cried the Chivalry, busy a-drumming,
And fifing and drilling, and such Quattle-bumming;
'With your April-fool slave hunt! Just wait till December
Shall see your new Senator stalk through the Chamber,
And Puritan heresy prove neither dumb nor
Blind in that pestilent Anakim, Sumner!'

A FRÉMONT CAMPAIGN SONG.

SOUND now the trumpet warningly!
The storm is rolling nearer,
The hour is striking clearer,
In the dusky dome of sky.
If dark and wild the morning be,
A darker morn before us
Shall fling its shadows o'er us
If we let the hour go by.
Sound we then the trumpet chorus!
Sound the onset wild and high!
Country and Liberty!
Freedom and Victory!
These words shall be our cry,—
Frémont and Victory!

Sound, sound the trumpet fearlessly!
Each arm its vigor lending,
Bravely with wrong contending,
And shouting Freedom's cry!
The Kansas homes stand cheerlessly,
The sky with flame is ruddy,
The prairie turf is bloody,
Where the brave and gentle die.
Sound the trumpet stern and steady!
Sound the trumpet strong and high!
Country and Liberty!
Freedom and Victory!
These words shall be our cry,—
Frémont and Victory!

Sound now the trumpet cheerily!
Nor dream of Heaven's forsaking
The issue of its making,
The Right with Wrong must try.
The cloud that hung so drearily
The Northern winds are breaking;
The Northern Lights are shaking
Their fire-flags in the sky.
Sound the signal of awaking;
Sound the onset wild and high!
Country and Liberty!
Freedom and Victory!
These words shall be our cry,—
Frémont and Victory!

1856.

THE QUAKERS ARE OUT.

[A campaign song written to be sung at a Republican Mass Meeting held in Newburyport, Mass., October 11, 1860.]

NOT vainly we waited and counted the hours,
The buds of our hope have all burst into flowers.

No room for misgiving—no loop-hole of doubt,—
We've heard from the Keystone! The Quakers are out.

The plot has exploded—we've found out the trick;
The bribe goes a-begging; the poison won't stick.
When the Wide-awake lanterns are shining about,
The rogues stay at home, and the true men are out!

The good State has broken the cords for her spun;
Her oil-springs and water won't fuse into one;
The Dutchman has seasoned with Freedom his krout,
And slow, late, but certain, the Quakers are out!

Give the flags to the winds! set the hills all aflame!
Make way for the man with the Patriarch's name!
Away with misgiving—away with all doubt,
For Lincoln goes in, when the Quakers are out!

A LEGEND OF THE LAKE.

[This poem, originally printed in the 'Atlantic Monthly,' was withheld from publication in his volumes by Mr. Whittier, in deference to living relatives of the hero of the poem. Death finally removed the restriction.]

SHOULD you go to Centre Harbor,
As haply you some time may
Sailing up the Winnepesaukee
From the hills of Alton Bay,—

Into the heart of the highlands,
Into the north wind free,
Through the rising and vanishing islands,
Over the mountain sea,—

To the little hamlet lying
White in its mountain fold,
Asleep by the lake and dreaming
A dream that is never told,—

And in the Red Hill's shadow
Your pilgrim home you make,
Where the chambers open to sunrise,
The mountains, and the lake,—

If the pleasant picture wearies,
As the fairest sometimes will,
And the weight of the hills lies on you
And the water is all too still,—

If in vain the peaks of Gunstock
Redden with sunrise fire,
And the sky and the purple mountains
And the sunset islands tire,—

If you turn from in-door thrumming
And the clatter of bowls without,
And the folly that goes on its travels,
Bearing the city about,—

And the cares you left behind you
Come hunting along your track,
As Blue-Cap in German fable
Rode on the traveller's pack,—

Let me tell you a tender story
Of one who is now no more,
A tale to haunt like a spirit
The Winnepesaukee shore,—

Of one who was brave and gentle,
And strong for manly strife,
Riding with cheering and music
Into the tourney of life.

Faltering and failing midway
In the Tempter's subtle snare,
The chains of an evil habit
He bowed himself to bear.

Over his fresh young manhood
The bestial veil was flung,—
The curse of the wine of Circe,
The spell her weavers sung.

Yearly did hill and lakeside
Their summer idyls frame;
Alone in his darkened dwelling
He hid his face for shame.

The music of life's great marches
Sounded for him in vain;
The voices of human duty
Smote on his ear like pain.

In vain over island and water
The curtains of sunset swung;
In vain on the beautiful mountains
The pictures of God were hung.

The wretched years crept onward,
Each sadder than the last;
All the bloom of life fell from him,
All the freshness and greenness past.

But deep in his heart forever
And unprofaned he kept
The love of his saintly mother,
Who in the graveyard slept.

His house had no pleasant pictures;
Its comfortless walls were bare:
But the riches of earth and ocean
Could not purchase his mother's chair.

The old chair, quaintly carven,
With oaken arms outspread,
Whereby, in the long gone twilights,
His childish prayers were said.

For thence in his long night watches,
By moon or starlight dim,
A face full of love and pity
And tenderness looked on him.

And oft, as the grieving presence
Sat in his mother's chair,
The groan of his self-upbraiding
Grew into wordless prayer.

At last, in the moonless midnight,
The summoning angel came,
Severe in his pity, touching
The house with fingers of flame.

The red light flashed from its windows
And flared from its sinking roof;
And baffled and awed before it
The villagers stood aloof.

They shrank from the falling rafters,
They turned from the furnace glare;
But its tenant cried, 'God help me!
I must save my mother's chair.'

Under the blazing portal,
Over the floor of fire,
He seemed, in the terrible splendor,
A martyr on his pyre.

In his face the mad flames smote him,
And stung him on either side;
But he clung to the sacred relic,—
By his mother's chair he died!

O mother, with human yearnings!
O saint, by the altar stairs!
Shall not the dear God give thee
The child of thy many prayers?

O Christ! by whom the loving,
Though erring, are forgiven,
Hast Thou for him no refuge,
No quiet place in heaven?

Give palms to Thy strong martyrs,
And crown Thy saints with gold,
But let the mother welcome
Her lost one to Thy fold!

1861.

LETTER TO LUCY LARCOM.

25th 3d mo., 1866.

BELIEVE me, Lucy Larcom, it gives me real sorrow
That I cannot take my carpet-bag and go to town to-morrow;
But I 'm 'snow-bound,' and cold on cold, like layers of an onion,
Have piled my back and weighed me down as with the pack of Bunyan.

The north-east wind is damper and the
north-west wind is colder,
Or else the matter simply is that I am
growing older.
And then I dare not trust a moon seen
over one's left shoulder,
As I saw this with slender horns caught
in a west hill-pine,
As on a Stamboul minaret curves the
arch-impostor's sign,—
So I must stay in Amesbury, and let you
go your way,
And guess what colors greet your eyes,
what shapes your steps delay;
What pictured forms of heathen lore, of
god and goddess please you,
What idol graven images you bend your
wicked knees to.
But why should I of evil dream, well
knowing at your head goes
That flower of Christian womanhood,
our dear good Anna Meadows.
She 'll be discreet, I 'm sure, although
once, in a freak romantic,
She flung the Doge's bridal ring, and
married 'The Atlantic'!
And spite of all appearances, like the
woman in a shoe,
She's got so many 'Young Folks' now,
she don't know what to do.
But I must say I think it strange that
thee and Mrs. Spaulding,
Whose lives with Calvin's five-railed creed
have been so tightly walled in,
Should quit your Puritan homes, and
take the pains to go
So far, with malice aforethought, to 'walk
in a vain show'!
Did Emmons hunt for pictures? Was
Jonathan Edwards peeping
Into the chambers of imagery, with maids
for Tammuz weeping?
Ah well! the times are sadly changed,
and I myself am feeling
The wicked world my Quaker coat from
off my shoulders peeling.
God grant that in the strange new sea of
change wherein we swim,
We still may keep the good old plank, of
simple faith in Him!

LINES ON LEAVING APPLEDORE.

[Sent in a letter to Celia Thaxter.]

UNDER the shadow of a cloud, the light
Died out upon the waters, like a smile
Chased from a face by grief. Following
the flight
Of a lone bird that, scudding with the
breeze,
Dipped its crank wing in leaden-colored
seas,
I saw in sunshine lifted, clear and
bright,
On the horizon's rim the Fortunate Isle
That claims thee as its fair inhabitant,
And glad of heart I whispered, 'Be to
her,
Bird of the summer sea, my messenger;
Tell her, if Heaven a fervent prayer will
grant,
This light that falls her island home
above
Making its slopes of rock and greenness
gay,
A partial glory midst surrounding gray,
Shall prove an earnest of our Father's
love,
More and more shining to the perfect
day.'

1864.

MRS. CHOATE'S HOUSE-WARMING.

['His washerwoman, Mrs. Choate, by industry and thrift had been enabled to build for her family a comfortable house. When it was ready for occupancy, there was a house-warming, attended by all the neighbors, who brought substantial tokens of their good-will, including all the furniture needed in her new parlor. Mr. Whittier's hand was to be seen in the whole movement; he was present at the festivity, and made a little speech, congratulating Mrs. Choate upon her well-deserved success in life, and said he would read a piece of machine poetry which had been intrusted to him for the occasion. These are the lines, which were, of course, of his own composition.'—S. T. PICKARD, *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*.]

Of rights and of wrongs
Let the feminine tongues
Talk on—none forbid it.
Our hostess best knew
What her hands found to do,
Asked no questions, but DID IT.

Here the lesson of work,
Which so many folks shirk,
Is so plain all may learn it;
Each brick in this dwelling,
Each timber is telling,
If you want a home, EARN IT.

The question of labor
Is solved by our neighbor,
The old riddle guessed out:
The wisdom sore needed,
The truth long unheeded,
Her flat-iron 's pressed out!

Thanks, then, to Kate Choate!
Let the idle take note
What their fingers were made for;
She, cheerful and jolly,
Worked on late and early,
And bought—what she paid for!

Never vainly repining,
Nor begging, nor whining;
The morning-star twinkles
On no heart that's lighter
As she makes the world whiter
And smoothes out its wrinkles.

So, long life to Kate!
May her heirs have to wait
Till they 're gray in attendance;
And her flat-iron press on,
Still teaching its lesson
Of brave independence!

AN AUTOGRAPH.

[Written for an old friend, Rev. S. H. Emery, of Quincy, Ill., who revisited Whittier in 1868.]

THE years that since we met have flown
Leave as they found me, still alone:
No wife, nor child, nor grandchild dear,
Are mine the heart of age to cheer.
More favored thou, with hair less gray
Than mine, canst let thy fancy stray
To where thy little Constance sees
The prairie ripple in the breeze;
For one like her to lisp thy name
Is better than the voice of fame.

TO LUCY LARCOM.

3d mo., 1870.

. . . . . .

PRAY give the 'Atlantic'
A brief unpedantic
Review of Miss Phelps' book,
Which teaches and helps folk
To deal with the offenders
In love which surrenders
All pride unforgiving,
The lost one receiving
With truthful believing
That she like all others,
Our sisters and brothers,
Is only a sinner
Whom God's love within her
Can change to the whiteness
Of heaven's own brightness.
For who shall see tarnish
If He sweep and garnish?
When He is the cleanser
Shall *we* dare to censure?
Say to Fields, if he ask of it,
I can't take the task of it.

. . . . . .

P. S.—For myself, if I'm able,
And half comfortable,
I shall run for the seashore
To some place as before,
Where blunt we at least find
The teeth of the East wind,
And spring does not tarry
As it does at Amesbury;
But where it will be to
I cannot yet see to.

A FAREWELL.

[Written for Mr. and Mrs. Claflin as they were about to sail to Europe.]

WHAT shall I say, dear friends, to whom
I owe
The choicest blessings, dropping from the
hands

Of trustful love and friendship, as you go
Forth on your journey to those older lands,
By saint and sage and bard and hero trod?
Scarcely the simple farewell of the Friends
Sufficeth; after you my full heart sends
Such benediction as the pilgrim hears
Where the Greek faith its golden dome uprears,
From Crimea's roses to Archangel snows,
The fittest prayer of parting: 'Go with God!'

1875.

ON A FLY-LEAF OF LONGFELLOW'S POEMS.

[Written at the Asquam House in the summer of 1882.]

HUSHED now the sweet consoling tongue
Of him whose lyre the Muses strung;
His last low swan-song has been sung!

His last! And ours, dear friend, is near;
As clouds that rake the mountains here,
We too shall pass and disappear.

Yet howsoever changed or tost,
Not even a wreath of mist is lost,
No atom can itself exhaust.

So shall the soul's superior force
Live on and run its endless course
In God's unlimited universe.

And we, whose brief reflections seem
To fade like clouds from lake and stream,
Shall brighten in a holier beam.

SAMUEL E. SEWALL.

[An inscription for a marble bust, modelled by Anne Whitney, and placed in the Cary Library, Lexington, Mass., May, 1884.]

LIKE that ancestral judge who bore his name,
Faithful to Freedom and to Truth, he gave,
When all the air was hot with wrath and blame,
His youth and manhood to the fettered slave.

And never Woman in her suffering saw
A helper tender, wise, and brave as he;
Lifting her burden of unrighteous law,
He shamed the breast of ancient chivalry.

Noiseless as light that melts the darkness is,
He wrought as duty led and honor bid,
No trumpet heralds victories like his,—
The unselfish worker in his work is hid.

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

[The album belonged to the grandson of Whittier's life-long friend, Theodore D. Weld, and the lines were written in April, 1884.]

WHAT shall I wish him? Strength and health
May be abused, and so may wealth.
Even fame itself may come to be
But wearying notoriety.

What better can I ask than this?—
A life of brave unselfishness,
Wisdom for council, eloquence
For Freedom's need, for Truth's defence,
The championship of all that's good,
The manliest faith in womanhood,

The steadfast friendship changing not
With change of time or place or lot,
Hatred of sin, but not the less
A heart of pitying tenderness
And charity, that, suffering long,
Shames the wrong-doer from his wrong:
One wish expresses all—that he
May even as his grandsire be!

A DAY'S JOURNEY.

[Written in 1886, for the tenth anniversary of the wedding of his niece.]

AFTER your pleasant morning travel
You pause as at a wayside inn,
And take with grateful hearts your breakfast
Though served in dishes all of TIN.

Then go, while years as hours are counted,
Until the dial's hand at noon
Invites you to a dinner table
Garnished with SILVER fork and spoon.

And when the vesper bell to supper
Is calling, and the day is old,
May love transmute the tin of morning
And noonday's silver into GOLD.

A FRAGMENT.

[Found among Mr. Whittier's papers, in his handwriting, but undated.]

THE dreadful burden of our sins we feel,
The pain of wounds which Thou alone canst heal,
To whom our weakness is our strong appeal.
From the black depths, the ashes, and the dross
Of our waste lives, we reach out to Thy cross,
And by its fullness measure all our loss!
That holy sign reveals Thee: throned above
No Moloch sits, no false, vindictive Jove—
Thou art our Father, and Thy name is Love[1]!

[1] This is an alternative reading which has been cancelled:—
'No lawless Terror dwells in light above,
Cruel as Moloch, deaf and false as Jove—
Thou art our Father, and Thy name is Love!'

NOTES

1. *Sole Pythoness of ancient Lynn.*

The Pythoness of ancient Lynn was the redoubtable Moll Pitcher, who lived under the shadow of High Rock in that town, and was sought far and wide for her supposed powers of divination. She died about 1810. Mr. Upham, in his *Salem Witchcraft*, has given an account of her.

2. *St. John.*

[Dr. Francis Parkman has given a detailed account of this episode in New England history in *The Feudal Chiefs of Acadia*, published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, January, February, 1893. The same series of incidents forms the basis of the romance by Mrs. Mary Hartwell Catherwood, entitled *The Lady of Fort St. John.*]

3. *The New Wife and the Old.*

[General Moulton's mansion may still be seen [1894] from the train, a hip-roofed house, standing on the right-hand side of the track, just before reaching the Hampton station as one comes from Boston. Twenty-five years after writing the poem, Mr. Whittier received a letter from a lady who had been spending a summer in the Moulton house, in which she said: 'I remember my mother's repeating to me her recollections of the exorcising of the ghosts of General Moulton and his wife by a parson Milton or Bodily [the Rev. John Boddily, who died in 1802, and is buried in a Newburyport burying-ground]. My grandfather Whipple being absent, the servants (several of them had been slaves in Newport) insisted that General Moulton and his wife disturbed the house so much at night, he thumping with his cane, and her dress "a-rustling up and down the stairs," that nothing could allay their terror; and one Mrs. Williams, the housekeeper, persisted so strongly that she frequently saw them both, he in a snuff-colored suit and enormous wig, holding a gold-headed cane, that nothing could induce them to remain in the house. Many persons in the vicinity came to the exorcising, or "laying the ghosts" as they termed it. My mother said the scene was very impressive to her as a child, and she could never forget the white and black servants and neighbors, standing in solemn awe, and the abjuring of the minister. The servants, I believe, never afterwards complained of being disturbed or of seeing the ghosts, after this ceremony.'

In his work on *The Supernaturalism of New England*, published in 1847, Mr. Whittier relates the legend of the ancient house. 'General Moulton's house was once burned in revenge, it is said, by the fiend, whom the former had outwitted. He had agreed, it seems, to furnish the general with a boot full of gold and silver, poured annually down the chimney. The shrewd Yankee cut off on one occasion the foot of the boot, and the Devil kept pouring down the coin from the chimney top, in a vain attempt to fill it, until the room was literally packed with the precious metal. When the general died, he was laid out, and put in a coffin as usual; but on the day of the funeral it was whispered about that his body was missing, and the neighbors came to the charitable conclusion that the enemy had got his own at last.']

4. *Here the mighty Bashaba.*

Bashaba was the name which the

Indians of New England gave to two or three of their principal chiefs, to whom all their inferior sagamores acknowledged allegiance. Passaconaway seems to have been one of these chiefs. His residence was at Pennacook. (*Mass. Hist. Coll.*, vol. iii. pp. 21, 22.) 'He was regarded,' says Hubbard, 'as a great sorcerer, and his fame was widely spread. It was said of him that he could cause a green leaf to grow in winter, trees to dance, water to burn, etc. He was, undoubtedly, one of those shrewd and powerful men whose achievements are always regarded by a barbarous people as the result of supernatural aid. The Indians gave to such the names of Powahs or Panisees.'

'The Panisees are men of great courage and wisdom, and to these the Devill appeareth more familiarly than to others.'—Winslow's *Relation*.

5. *Thus o'er the heart of Weetamoo.*

'The Indians,' says Roger Williams, 'have a god whom they call Wetuomanit, who presides over the household.'

6. *Drawn from that great stone vase.*

There are rocks in the river at the Falls of Amoskeag, in the cavities of which, tradition says, the Indians formerly stored and concealed their corn.

7. *Aukeetamit.*

The Spring God.—See Roger Williams's *Key to the Indian Language*.

8. *Mat wonck kunna-monee.*

We shall see thee or her no more.—See Roger Williams's *Key*.

9. *Sowanna.*

'The Great South West God.'—See Roger Williams's *Observations*, etc.

10. *As we charged on Tilly's line.*

The barbarities of Count De Tilly after the siege of Magdeburg made such an impression upon our forefathers that the phrase 'like old Tilly' is still heard sometimes in New England of any piece of special ferocity.

11. *A fire-mount in a frozen zone.*

Dr. Hooker, who accompanied Sir James Ross in his expedition of 1841, thus describes the appearance of that unknown land of frost and fire which was seen in latitude 77° south,—a stupendous chain of mountains, the whole mass of which, from its highest point to the ocean, was covered with everlasting snow and ice:—

'The water and the sky were both as blue, or rather more intensely blue, than I have ever seen them in the tropics, and all the coast was one mass of dazzlingly beautiful peaks of snow, which, when the sun approached the horizon, reflected the most brilliant tints of golden yellow and scarlet; and then, to see the dark cloud of smoke, tinged with flame, rising from the volcano in a perfect unbroken column, one side jet-black, the other giving back the colors of the sun, sometimes turning off at a right angle by some current of wind, and stretching many miles to leeward! This was a sight so surpassing everything that can be imagined, and so heightened by the consciousness that we had penetrated, under the guidance of our commander, into regions far beyond what was ever deemed practicable, that it caused a feeling of awe to steal over us at the consideration of our own comparative insignificance and helplessness, and at the same time an indescribable feeling of the greatness of the Creator in the works of His hand.'

12. *Here is the place.*

['The place Whittier had in mind was his birthplace. There were beehives on the garden terrace near the well-sweep, occupied perhaps by the descendants of Thomas Whittier's bees. The approach to the house from over the northern shoulder of Job's Hill by a path that was in constant use in his boyhood and still in existence, is accurately described in the poem. The "gap in the old wall" is still to be seen, and "the stepping-stones in the shallow brook" are still in use. His sister's garden was down by the brook-side in front of the house, and her daffodils are perpetuated and may now be found in their season each year in that place. The red-barred gate, the poplars, the cattle-yard with "the white horns tossing above the wall," were all part of Whittier's boy life on the old farm. Even the touch of "the sundown's blaze on her window-pane" is realistic. The only place from which the blaze of the setting sun could be seen reflected in the windows of the old mansion is from the path so perfectly described. . . . All the story about Mary and her lover is wholly imaginative.'—S. T. Pickard in his *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*.

13. *Of the fast which the good man life-long kept.*

It was the custom in Sewall's time for churches and individuals to hold fasts whenever any public or private need suggested the fitness; and as state and church were very closely connected, the

General Court sometimes ordered a fast. Out of this custom sprang the annual fast in spring, now observed [1888], but it is of comparatively recent date. Such a fast was ordered on the 14th of January, 1697, when Sewall made his special confession of guilt in condemning innocent persons under the supposition that they were witches. He is said to have observed the day privately on each annual return thereafter.

14. *His burden of prophecy yet remains.*

[In point of fact the 'old man wise and good,' 'propped on his staff of age,' was forty-five years old when he uttered his prophecy.]

15. *The Red River Voyageur.*

[The church of St. Boniface was burned in 1860, the year after *The Red River Voyageur* was printed. The bells were broken in their fall, and the fragments were sent to London, recast by their original founder, and restored to their place in the new cathedral of St. Boniface.]

16. *Cobbler Keezar's Vision.*

[For a fuller account of Cobbler Keezar, see Whittier's paper on *The Border War of 1708* in his *Prose Works*, vol. ii. pp. 375, 376. Cobbler Keezar was wont to pitch his tent on Po Hill and mend the footgear of the Amesbury people. The old towns of Amesbury and Salisbury, within a few years consolidated, were divided by the Powow River. The falls described in the poem are concealed from view now by the factories and the arches which span the river.]

17. *Or the stone of Dr. Dee.*

Dr. John Dee was a man of erudition, who had an extensive museum, library, and apparatus; he claimed to be an astrologer, and had acquired the reputation of having dealings with evil spirits, and a mob was raised which destroyed the greater part of his possessions. He professed to raise the dead and had a magic crystal. He died a pauper in 1608.

18. *The Countess.*

[There is a slight inaccuracy in Whittier's head-note to *The Countess*. According to Miss Rebecca I. Davis, *Gleanings from the Valley of the Merrimac*, where she gives her authorities, the marriage took place March 21, 1805. The Countess died January 5, 1807. Count Vipart returned to Guadaloupe, whence he had come to this country at the time of the insurrection; there he married again, and there he died and was buried, but his remains were afterward removed to the family tomb in Bordeaux, France. Mr. Matthew Whittier, the poet's only brother, married Abby, daughter of Joseph Rochemont de Poyen.]

19. *As once he heard in sweet Von Merlau's bowers.*

Eleonora Johanna Von Merlau, or, as Sewall the Quaker Historian gives it, Von Merlane, a noble young lady of Frankfort, seems to have held among the Mystics of that city very much such a position as Anna Maria Schurmaus did among the Labadists of Holland. William Penn appears to have shared the admiration of her own immediate circle for this accomplished and gifted lady.

20. *Or painful Kelpius from his hermit den.*

Magister Johann Kelpius, a graduate of the University of Helmstadt, came to Pennsylvania in 1694, with a company of German Mystics. They made their home in the woods on the Wissahickon, a little west of the Quaker settlement of Germantown. Kelpius was a believer in the near approach of the Millennium, and was a devout student of the Book of Revelation, and the *Morgen-Rothe* of Jacob Behmen. He called his settlement 'The Woman in the Wilderness' (*Das Weib in der Wueste*). He was only twenty-four years of age when he came to America, but his gravity, learning, and devotion placed him at the head of the settlement. He disliked the Quakers, because he thought they were too exclusive in the matter of ministers. He was, like most of the Mystics, opposed to the severe doctrinal views of Calvin and even Luther, declaring 'that he could as little agree with the *Damnamus* of the Augsburg Confession as with the *Anathema* of the Council of Trent.'

He died in 1704, sitting in his little garden surrounded by his grieving disciples. Previous to his death it is said that he cast his famous 'Stone of Wisdom' into the river, where that mystic souvenir of the times of Van Helmont, Paracelsus, and Agrippa has lain ever since, undisturbed.

21. *Or Sluyter, saintly familist, whose word.*

Peter Sluyter, or Schluter, a native of Wesel, united himself with the sect of Labadists, who believed in the Divine commission of John De Labadie, a Roman Catholic priest converted to Protestantism, enthusiastic, eloquent, and evidently sincere in his special calling and election to separate the true and living members of the Church of Christ from the formalism

and hypocrisy of the ruling sects. George Keith and Robert Barclay visited him at Amsterdam, and afterward at the communities of Herford and Wieward; and, according to Gerard Croes, found him so near to them on some points, that they offered to take him into the Society of Friends. This offer, if it was really made, which is certainly doubtful, was, happily for the Friends at least, declined. Invited to Herford in Westphalia by Elizabeth, daughter of the Elector Palatine, De Labadie and his followers preached incessantly, and succeeded in arousing a wild enthusiasm among the people, who neglected their business and gave way to excitements and strange practices. Men and women, it was said, at the Communion drank and danced together, and private marriages, or spiritual unions, were formed. Labadie died in 1674 at Altona, in Denmark, maintaining his testimonies to the last. 'Nothing remains for me,' he said, 'except to go to my God. Death is merely ascending from a lower and narrower chamber to one higher and holier.'

In 1679, Peter Sluyter and Jasper Dankers were sent to America by the community at the Castle of Wieward. Their journal, translated from the Dutch and edited by Henry C. Murphy, has been recently (1872) published by the Long Island Historical Society. They made some converts, and among them was the eldest son of Hermanns, the proprietor of a rich tract of land at the head of Chesapeake Bay, known as Bohemia Manor. Sluyter obtained a grant of this tract, and established upon it a community numbering at one time a hundred souls. Very contradictory statements are on record regarding his headship of this spiritual family, the discipline of which seems to have been of more than monastic severity. Certain it is that he bought and sold slaves, and manifested more interest in the world's goods than became a believer in the near Millennium. He evinces in his journal an overweening spiritual pride, and speaks contemptuously of other professors, especially the Quakers whom he met in his travels. The latter, on the contrary, seem to have looked favorably upon the Labadists, and uniformly speak of them courteously and kindly. His journal shows him to have been destitute of common gratitude and Christian charity. He threw himself upon the generous hospitality of the Friends wherever he went, and repaid their kindness by the coarsest abuse and misrepresentation.

22. *His long-disused and half-forgotten lore.*

Among the pioneer Friends were many men of learning and broad and liberal views. Penn was conversant with every department of literature and philosophy. Thomas Lloyd was a ripe and rare scholar. The great Loganian Library of Philadelphia bears witness to the varied learning and classical taste of its donor, James Logan. Thomas Story, member of the Council of State, Master of the Rolls and Commissioner of Claims under William Penn, and an able minister of his Society, took a deep interest in scientific questions, and in a letter to his friend Logan, written while on a religious visit to Great Britain, seems to have anticipated the conclusion of modern geologists. 'I spent,' he says, 'some months, especially at Scarborough, during the season attending meetings, at whose high cliffs and the variety of strata therein and their several positions I further learned and was confirmed in some things,—that the earth is of much older date as to the beginning of it than the time assigned in the Holy Scriptures as commonly understood, which is suited to the common capacities of mankind, as to six days of progressive work, by which I understand certain long and competent periods of time, and not natural days.' It was sometimes made a matter of reproach by the Anabaptists and other sects, that the Quakers read profane writings and philosophies, and that they quoted heathen moralists in support of their views. Sluyter and Dankers, in their journal of American travels, visiting a Quaker preacher's house at Burlington, on the Delaware, found 'a volume of Virgil lying on the window, as if it were a common hand-book; also Helmont's book on Medicine (*Ortus Medicinæ, id est Initia Physica inaudita progressus medicinæ novus in morborum ultionam ad vitam longam*), whom, in an introduction they have made to it, they make to pass for one of their own sect, although in his lifetime he did not know anything about Quakers.' It would appear from this that the half-mystical, half-scientific writings of the alchemist and philosopher of Vilverde had not escaped the notice of Friends, and that they had included him in their broad eclecticism.

23. *As still in Hemskerck's Quaker Meeting.*

'The Quaker's Meeting,' a painting by E. Hemskerck (supposed to be Egbert Hemskerck the younger, son of Egbert Hemskerck the old), in which William

Penn and others—among them Charles II., or the Duke of York—are represented along with the rudest and most stolid class of the British rural population at that period. Hemskerck came to London from Holland with King William in 1689. He delighted in wild, grotesque subjects, such as the nocturnal intercourse of witches and the temptation of St. Anthony. Whatever was strange and uncommon attracted his free pencil. Judging from the portrait of Penn, he must have drawn his faces, figures, and costumes from life, although there may be something of caricature in the convulsed attitudes of two or three of the figures.

24. *The Indian from his face washed all his war-paint off.*

In one of his letters addressed to German Friends, Pastorius says: 'These wild men, who never in their life heard Christ's teachings about temperance and contentment, herein far surpass the Christians. They live far more contented and unconcerned for the morrow. They do not overreach in trade. They know nothing of our everlasting pomp and stylishness. They neither curse nor swear, are temperate in food and drink, and if any of them get drunk, the mouth-Christians are at fault, who, for the sake of accursed lucre, sell them strong drink.'

Again he wrote in 1698 to his father that he finds the Indians reasonable people, willing to accept good teaching and manners, evincing an inward piety toward God, and more eager, in fact, to understand things divine than many among those who in the pulpit teach Christ in word, but by ungodly life deny Him.

'It is evident,' says Professor Seidensticker, 'Pastorius holds up the Indian as Nature's unspoiled child to the eyes of the "European Babel," somewhat after the same manner in which Tacitus used the barbarian *Germani* to shame his degenerate countrymen.'

As believers in the universality of the Saving Light, the outlook of early Friends upon the heathen was a very cheerful and hopeful one. God was as near to them as to Jew or Anglo-Saxon; as accessible at Timbuctoo as at Rome or Geneva. Not the letter of Scripture, but the spirit which dictated it, was of saving efficacy. Robert Barclay is nowhere more powerful than in his argument for the salvation of the heathen, who live according to their light, without knowing even the name of Christ. William Penn thought Socrates as good a Christian as Richard Baxter. Early Fathers of the Church, as Origen and Justin Martyr, held broader views on this point than modern Evangelicals. Even Augustine, from whom Calvin borrowed his theology, admits that he has no controversy with the admirable philosophers Plato and Plotinus. 'Nor do I think,' he says in *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xviii., cap. 47, 'that the Jews dare affirm that none belonged unto God but the Israelites.'

25. *To-morrow shall bring another day.*

A common saying of Valdemar; hence his sobriquet *Alterdag*.

26. *The Witch of Wenham.*

[The house referred to in the head-note is that known as the old Prince house, near Oak Knoll, on the estate now owned by the Xaverian Brothers. In sending the poem to *The Atlantic*, where it was first published, Whittier wrote to the editor: 'I do not know how it may strike thee; to me (who am no good judge) it seems one of my best.']

27. *The Homestead.*

[In a letter written after the appearance of *The Homestead*, Whittier wrote: 'I saw in the country several of these melancholy spectacles of abandoned homes. I think the farmers of New England are better off as a class, on their hard soil, than those who are on the rich lands of the West. They are not rich, but they are not poor; they live comfortably, and as a rule own their farms clear of mortgage. If they were content to live and toil as the poorer farmers in the West do, they would double their deposits in the savings banks.']

28. *And led by Him, nor man nor devils I fear.*

'He [Macy] shook the dust from off his feet, and departed with all his worldly goods and his family. He encountered a severe storm, and his wife, influenced by some omens of disaster, besought him to put back. He told her not to fear, for his faith was perfect. But she entreated him again. Then the spirit that impelled him broke forth: "Woman, go below and seek thy God. I fear not the witches on earth, or the devils in hell!"'—*Life of Robert Pike*, page 55.

29. *The hardy Anglo-Saxon stood.*

The celebrated Captain Smith, after resigning the government of the Colony in Virginia, in his capacity of 'Admiral of New England,' made a careful survey of the coast from Penobscot to Cape Cod, in the summer of 1614.

30. *The sweetest name in all his story.*
Captain Smith gave to the promontory, now called Cape Ann, the name of Tragabizanda, in memory of his young and beautiful mistress of that name, who, while he was a captive at Constantinople, like Desdemona, 'loved him for the dangers he had passed.'

31. *The Old Burying-Ground.*
[This poem was written with a thought of the ancient cemetery at East Haverhill, near Rocks Village. 'The entire piece,' Whittier wrote to Lowell, 'has now to me a deep and solemn significance. It was written in part while watching at the sick-bed of my dear mother—now no longer with us. She passed away a few days ago, in the beautiful serenity of a Christian faith, a quiet and peaceful dismissal.']

32. *The River Path.*
[To a friend who inquired as to the origin of this poem, Whittier wrote: 'The poem was suggested by an evening on the Merrimac River in company with my dear sister, who is no longer with me, having crossed the river (as I fervently hope), to the glorified hill of God.']

33. *The Vanishers.*
[This was the first poem written by Whittier after the death of his sister Elizabeth. In a letter to Mr. Fields he says: 'If thee have read Schoolcraft thee will remember what he says of the Packwud-jinnies or "little vanishers."' The reference is to *History, Condition and Prospects of the American Indians*, pp. 122, 123.]

34. *I see the gray fort's broken wall.*
[The place that was in the mind of the poet when he wrote this stanza was on the rocks at Marblehead, where he had spent an early morning more than forty years before.]

35. *Over Sibmah's vine.*
'O vine of Sibmah! I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer!'—*Jeremiah*, xlviii. 32.

36. *Even as the great Augustine*
Questioned earth and sea and sky.
'Interrogavi Terram,' etc. August., *Soliloq.*, Cap. xxxi.

37. *To a Friend.*
[The friend was Elizabeth Neall, afterward Mrs. Sydney Howard Gay.]

38. *Lucy Hooper.*
[It was in the summer of 1837, while residing in New York, that Whittier made the acquaintance of Lucy Hooper. She was a native of Essex County, and was at that time living with her parents in Brooklyn. Whittier encouraged her literary ambition, for she had given promise of poetic excellence, and was considering the advisability of publishing a volume. When Whittier shortly afterward was editing *The Pennsylvania Freeman*, he printed several of her poems. Later in 1839 he was with her by the Merrimac one August afternoon.]

39. *And the goodman's voice, at strife*
With his shrill and tipsy wife.
[When Whittier first went to school with his sister Mary, the school-house was undergoing repairs, and the school was held in a dwelling-house, the other part of which was occupied by a tipsy and quarrelsome couple.]

40. *Homilies from Oldbug hear.*
Dr. Withington, author of *The Puritan*, under the name of Jonathan Oldbug.

41. *The holy monk of Kempen spake.*
Thomas à Kempis in *De Imitatione Christi*.

42. *When, years ago, beside the summer sea.*
[In the great political contest of 1850, in Massachusetts, when the United States senatorship was in question, Whittier took an active part in forming the coalition between the Free Soilers and the Democrats. He went to Phillips Beach, Swampscott, to see Sumner and induce him to accept the nomination.]

43. *I thank you for sweet summer days.*
[At one of the Laurel festivals the guests who had so often enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Ashby presented them with an album containing photographs and other tokens of their appreciation. Upon the first page were written these lines by Whittier:—

DEAR FRIENDS:—
Accept this book whose pages hold
The sun-traced shadows manifold
Of friends, who 've known you long and well
At city hearth, in sylvan dell,
Enjoying under roof and tree
Your liberal hospitality;
Who grateful own that while you gave
Your life-long labor to the slave,
(A labor crowned with more success
Than hope could dream, or wisdom guess)
You kept warm hearts, and opened wide
Your windows on life's sunny side.
Take, then, the volume with our thanks,
And long upon your river banks
When in azalia-gladdened woods
The June sun swells the laurel buds,
May we still meet as we have met,
And larger make to you our debt.]

44. *Hymn for the House of Worship at Georgetown.*

[Whittier published the following card in the Boston *Transcript*, January 30, 1868: 'In writing the *Hymn for the Memorial Church at Georgetown*, the author, as his verses indicate, has sole reference to the tribute of a brother and sister to the memory of a departed mother, —a tribute which seemed, and still seems to him in itself considered, very beautiful and appropriate; but he has since seen with surprise and sorrow a letter read at the dedication, imposing certain extraordinary restrictions upon the society which is to occupy the house. It is due to himself, as a simple act of justice, to say that had he known of the existence of that letter previously, the Hymn would never have been written, nor his name in any way connected with the proceedings.' The restrictions imposed were designed to prevent the use of the building for any lecture or discussion on political subjects or other matters inconsistent with the preaching of the gospel.]

45. *Fie on the witch!*

Goody Cole was brought before the Quarter Sessions in 1680 to answer to the charge of being a witch. The Court could not find satisfactory evidence of witchcraft, but so strong was the feeling against her that Major Waldron, the presiding magistrate, ordered her to be imprisoned, with a 'lock kept on her leg,' at the pleasure of the Court. In such judicial action one can read the fear and vindictive spirit of the community at large.

46. *'Amen!' said Father Bachiler.*

[Evidence found in favor of the Rev. Stephen Bachiler, an ancestor of the poet, after the poem was first printed, led Whittier to modify lines which implied the guilt of the clergyman.]

47. *His Crimean camp-song, hints to us.*

The reference is to Bayard Taylor's poem, *The Song of the Camp.*

48. *The Palatine.*

[The legend on which this ballad is founded was told to Mr. Whittier by his friend, Joseph P. Hazard, of Newport, R. I., two years before the poem was written. About two years after it was published, he received a curious letter from Mr. Benjamin Corydon, of Napoli, N.Y., then in the ninety-second year of his age, who wrote:—

'The Palatine was a ship that was driven upon Block Island, in a storm, more than a hundred years ago. Her people had just got ashore, and were on their knees thanking God for saving them from drowning, when the Islanders rushed upon them and murdered them all. That was a little more than the Almighty could stand, so He sent the Fire or Phantom Ship, to let them know He had not forgotten their wickedness. She was seen once a year on the same night of the year on which the murders occurred, as long as any of the wreckers were living; but never after all were dead. I must have seen her eight or ten times—perhaps more—in my early days. It is seventy years or more since she was last seen. My father lived right opposite Block Island, on the mainland, so we had a fair view of her as she passed down by the island, then she would disappear. She resembled a full-rigged ship, with her sails all set and all ablaze. It was the grandest sight I ever saw in all my life. I know of only two living who ever saw her,—Benjamin L. Knowles, of Rhode Island, now ninety-four years old, and myself, now in my ninety-second year.']

49. *Toussaint L'Ouverture.*

The reader may, perhaps, call to mind the beautiful sonnet of William Wordsworth, addressed to Toussaint L'Ouverture, during his confinement in France:—

Toussaint!—thou most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling rustic tends his plough
Within thy hearing, or thou liest now
Buried in some deep dungeon's earless den;
O miserable chieftain!—where and when
Wilt thou find patience?—Yet, die not, do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow;
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies,—
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies.
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

50. *And he, the basest of the base.*

The Northern author of the Congressional rule against receiving petitions of the people on the subject of Slavery.

50a. *So shalt thou deftly raise*
The market price of human flesh.

There was at the time when this poem was written an Association in Liberty County, Georgia, for the religious instruction of negroes. One of their annual reports contains an address by the Rev. Josiah Spry Law, in which the following passage occurs: 'There is a growing interest in this community in the religious instruction of Negroes. There is a conviction that religious instruction promotes

the quiet and order of the people, and the pecuniary interest of the owners.'

51. *The Pine-Tree.*

[Whittier wrote this poem immediately upon reading the proceedings of the convention. He enclosed it in the following note to Charles Sumner: 'I have just read the proceedings of your Whig convention, and the lines enclosed are a feeble expression of my feelings. I look upon the rejection of Stephen C. Phillips's resolutions as an evidence that the end and aim of the managers of the convention was to go just far enough to scare the party and no farther. All thanks for the free voices of thyself, Phillips, Allen, and Adams. Notwithstanding the result you have not spoken in vain. If thee thinks well enough of these verses, hand them to the *Whig* or *Chronotype*.']

52. *I hear the Free-Wills singing.*

The book-establishment of the Free-Will Baptists in Dover was refused the act of incorporation by the New Hampshire Legislature, for the reason that the newspaper organ of that sect and its leading preachers favored abolition.

53. *Our Belknap brother heard with awe.*

The senatorial editor of the *Belknap Gazette* all along manifested a peculiar horror of 'niggers' and 'nigger parties.'

54. *At Pittsfield Reuben Leavitt saw.*

The justice before whom Elder Storrs was brought, for preaching abolition, on a writ drawn by Hon. M. N., Jr., of Pittsfield. The sheriff served the writ while the elder was praying.

55. *The schoolhouse, out of Canaan hauled.*

The academy at Canaan, N.H., received one or two colored scholars, and was in consequence dragged off into a swamp by Democratic teams.

56. *What boots it that we pelted out*
The anti-slavery women.

The Female Anti-Slavery Society, at its first meeting in Concord, was assailed with stones and brickbats.

57. *For this did shifty Atherton*
Make gag rules for the Great House?

'Papers and memorials touching the subject of slavery shall be laid on the table without reading, debate, or reference.' So read the gag-law, as it was called, introduced into the House by Mr. Atherton.

58. *The first great triumph won*
In Freedom's name.

The election of Charles Sumner to the United States Senate 'followed hard upon' the rendition of the fugitive Sims by the United States officials and the armed police of Boston.

59. *To William H. Seward.*

['Tell Mr. Seward,' Whittier wrote to A. W. Thayer, February 1, 1861, 'I have bound him to good behavior in my verse, and that if he yields the ground upon which the election was carried and consents to the further extension of slavery he will compromise *me*, as well as the country and himself.']

60. *Garrison.*

[Whittier's tribute to 'Garrison' was published in the *Independent*, June 5, 1879, and was accompanied by the following letter to the editor:—

'At the solemn and impressive funeral of my beloved and early friend, William Lloyd Garrison, one of the speakers read a part of the following poem, which I now send, asking a place for it in thy paper, although after the surpassingly beautiful tribute of Wendell Phillips, and the perhaps still more touchingly eloquent words of Theodore D. Weld, it may seem almost superfluous. Something on my part seems due to the intimate friendship of more than fifty years, unbroken and undisturbed by any differences of opinion and action during the long anti-slavery struggle.']

61. *And beauty is its own excuse.*

For the idea of this line I am indebted to Emerson, in his inimitable sonnet to the Rhodora:—

> If eyes were made for seeing,
> Then Beauty is its own excuse for being.

62. *No social smoke*
Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.

[So isolated was the Whittier homestead that from the date of its erection to the present time no neighbor's roof has been in sight.]

63. *Ah, brother! only I and thou.*

[Matthew Franklin Whittier, born July 4, 1812, died January 7, 1883. In middle life, during his residence in Portland, he took a deep interest in the anti-slavery movement, and wrote a series of caustic letters under the signature Ethan Spike of Hornby.]

64. *The African Chief* was the title of a poem by Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton, wife of the Hon. Perez Morton, a former attorney-general of Massachusetts. Mrs. Morton's *nom de plume* was *Philenia*.

The school book in which *The African Chief* was printed was Caleb Bingham's *The American Preceptor*, and the poem contained fifteen stanzas, of which the first four were as follows:—

See how the black ship cleaves the main
High-bounding o'er the violet wave,
Remurmuring with the groans of pain,
Deep freighted with the princely slave.

Did all the gods of Afric sleep,
Forgetful of their guardian love,
When the white traitors of the deep
Betrayed him in the palmy grove?

A chief of Gambia's golden shore,
Whose arm the band of warriors led,
Perhaps the lord of boundless power,
By whom the foodless poor were fed.

Does not the voice of reason cry,
'Claim the first right which nature gave;
From the red scourge of bondage fly,
Nor deign to live a burdened slave'?

65. *Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint.* Chalkley's own narrative of this incident, as given in his *Journal*, is as follows: 'To stop their murmuring, I told them they should not need to cast lots, which was usual in such cases, which of us should die first, for I would freely offer up my life to do them good. One said, "God bless you! I will not eat any of you." Another said, "He would die before he would eat any of me," and so said several. I can truly say, on that occasion, at that time, my life was not dear to me, and that I was serious and ingenuous in my proposition: and as I was leaning over the side of the vessel, thoughtfully considering my proposal to the company, and looking in my mind to Him that made me, a very large dolphin came up towards the top or surface of the water, and looked me in the face; and I called the people to put a hook into the sea, and take him, for here is one come to redeem me (I said to them). And they put a hook into the sea, and the fish readily took it and they caught him. He was longer than myself. I think he was about six feet long, and the largest that ever I saw. This plainly showed us that we ought not to distrust the providence of the Almighty. The people were quieted by this act of Providence, and murmured no more. We caught enough to eat plentifully of, till we got into the capes of Delaware.'

66. *Our uncle, innocent of books.* [For further account of Whittier's uncle Moses, the reader is referred to Whittier's *Prose Works*, vol. i. p. 323.]

67. *There, too, our elder sister plied.* [Mary Whittier, born September 3, 1806, married Jacob Caldwell of Haverhill, had two children, Lewis Henry and Mary Elizabeth, and died January 7, 1860.]

68. *Our youngest and our dearest sat.* [Elizabeth Hussey Whittier, born December 7, 1815, was to her brother John what Dorothy Wordsworth was to William. It was her brother's opinion that 'had her health, sense of duty, and almost morbid dread of spiritual and intellectual egotism permitted, she might have taken a high place among lyrical singers.' She died September 3, 1864.]

69. *The master of the district school.* [Until near the end of his life, Whittier was unable to recall the name of the schoolmaster who stood for this figure in *Snow-Bound*. At last he remembered his name as Haskell, and from this clue the person was traced. He was George Haskell from Waterford, Maine, a Dartmouth student, who studied medicine, and died in Vineland, New Jersey, in 1876.]

70. *Another guest that winter night.* [In his introductory note, Whittier adds somewhat to his characterization of Harriet Livermore. At the time when *Snow-Bound* was written he did not know that she was living, or he might not have introduced her. She died in 1867.]

71. *The crazy Queen of Lebanon.* An interesting account of Lady Hester Stanhope may be found in Kinglake's *Eothen*, chap. viii.

72. *These Flemish pictures of old days.* [In 1888 Whittier wrote the following lines on the fly-leaf of a copy of the first edition of *Snow-Bound*:—

Twenty years have taken flight
Since these pages saw the light.
All home loves are gone,
But not all with sadness, still,
Do the eyes of memory fill
As I gaze thereon.

Lone and weary life seemed when
First these pictures of the pen
Grew upon my page;
But I still have loving friends
And the peace our Father sends
Cheers the heart of age.

73. *From the Bay State's graceful daughter.* [The late Mrs. Jettie Morrill Wason, daughter of the late Hon. George Morrill of Amesbury.]

74. *O Beauty, old yet ever new.*

'Too late I loved Thee, O Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new! And lo! Thou wert within, and I abroad searching for Thee. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee.'—August., *Soliloq.*, Book X.

75. *Who saw the Darkness overflowed.*

'And I saw that there was an Ocean of Darkness and Death: but an infinite Ocean of Light and Love flowed over the Ocean of Darkness: And in that I saw the infinite Love of God.'—George Fox's *Journal*.

76. *The Cry of a Lost Soul.*

The story of the origin of this name, *El alma perdida*, is thus related by Lieut. Herndon. 'An Indian and his wife went out from the village to work their chacra, carrying their infant with them. The woman went to the spring to get water, leaving the man in charge of the child, with many cautions to take good care of it. When she arrived at the spring, she found it dried up, and went further to look for another. The husband, alarmed at her long absence, left the child and went in search. When they returned the child was gone; and to their repeated cries, as they wandered through the woods in search, they could get no response save the wailing cry of this little bird heard for the first time, whose notes their anxious and excited imagination syllabled into *pa-pa, ma-ma* (the present Quichua name of the bird). I suppose the Spaniards heard this story, and with that religious poetic turn of thought which seems peculiar to this people, called the bird "The Lost Soul."'—*Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon made under direction of the Navy Department*. By William Lewis Herndon and Lardner Gibbon, Part I. p. 156.

77. *The Light that is felt.*

[The origin of this poem is explained in the following letter from Mrs. George A. Palmer, of Elmira, N. Y.:—

'When my oldest daughter was two and a half years old she knew Whittier's *Barefoot Boy* by heart, thus: when I would repeat it to her the omission of a line would be instantly corrected, as one day she said to me, "Mamma, you skipted out 'apples of Cusperides.'" Once, in going ahead of me in a dark hall, she turned with sudden fear, and said, "Mamma, take hold of my hand, so it will not be so dark." This incident and the fact of her affection for Mr. Whittier's poetry was reported to him by a friend of the family. My surprise and delight were great when, in April, 1884, I received a kind letter from the poet and a manuscript copy of the poem, which was afterward published in the Christmas number of *St. Nicholas*. In his letter Mr. Whittier said, "I am glad to have such a friend in thy little girl. Her good opinion of my verses is worth more to me than that of a learned reviewer. I send a rhymed paraphrase of her own beautiful thought."']

78. *Mogg Megone.*

Mogg Megone, or Hegone, was a leader among the Saco Indians, in the bloody war of 1677. He attacked and captured the garrison at Black Point, October 12th of that year; and cut off, at the same time, a party of Englishmen near Saco River. From a deed signed by this Indian in 1664, and from other circumstances, it seems that, previous to the war, he had mingled much with the colonists. On this account, he was probably selected by the principal sachems as their agent in the treaty signed in November, 1676.

79. *'T was the gift of Castine to Mogg Megone.*

Baron de St. Castine came to Canada in 1644. Leaving his civilized companions, he plunged into the great wilderness, and settled among the Penobscot Indians, near the mouth of their noble river. He here took for his wives the daughters of the great Modocawando,—the most powerful sachem of the East. His castle was plundered by Governor Andros, during his reckless administration; and the enraged Baron is supposed to have excited the Indians into open hostility to the English.

80. *Grey Jocelyn's eye is never sleeping.*

The owner and commander of the garrison at Black Point, which Mogg attacked and plundered. He was an old man at the period to which the tale relates.

81. *Where Philip's men their watch are keeping.*

Major Phillips, one of the principal men of the Colony. His garrison sustained a long and terrible siege by the savages. As a magistrate and a gentleman, he exacted of his plebeian neighbors a remarkable degree of deference. The Court Records of the settlement inform us that an individual was fined for the heinous offence of saying that 'Major Phillips's mare was as lean as an Indian dog.'

82. *Steals Harmon down from the sands of York.*

Captain Harmon, of Georgeana, now

York, was for many years the terror of the Eastern Indians. In one of his expeditions up the Kennebec River, at the head of a party of rangers, he discovered twenty of the savages asleep by a large fire. Cautiously creeping towards them until he was certain of his aim, he ordered his men to single out their objects. The first discharge killed or mortally wounded the whole number of the unconscious sleepers.

83. *For vengeance left his vine-hung isle.*

Wood Island, near the mouth of the Saco. It was visited by the Sieur de Monts and Champlain, in 1603. The following extract, from the journal of the latter, relates to it: 'Having left the Kennebec, we ran along the coast to the westward, and cast anchor under a small island, near the mainland, where we saw twenty or more natives. I here visited an island, beautifully clothed with a fine growth of forest trees, particularly of the oak and walnut; and overspread with vines, that, in their season, produce excellent grapes. We named it the island of Bacchus.'—*Les Voyages de Sieur Champlain*, liv. 2, c. 8.

84. *The hunted outlaw, Bonython.*

John Bonython was the son of Richard Bonython, Gent., one of the most efficient and able magistrates of the Colony. John proved to be 'a degenerate plant.' In 1635, we find by the Court Records that, for some offence, he was fined 40*s*. In 1640, he was fined for abuse toward R. Gibson, the minister, and Mary, his wife. Soon after he was fined for disorderly conduct in the house of his father. In 1645, the 'Great and General Court adjudged John Bonython outlawed, and incapable of any of his Majesty's laws, and proclaimed him a rebel.' (*Court Records of the Province*, 1645.) In 1651, he bade defiance to the laws of Massachusetts, and was again outlawed. He acted independently of all law and authority; and hence, doubtless, his burlesque title of 'the Sagamore of Saco,' which has come down to the present generation in the following epitaph:—

> Here lies Bonython, the Sagamore of Saco;
> He lived a rogue, and died a knave, and went to Hobomoko.

By some means or other, he obtained a large estate. In this poem, I have taken some liberties with him, not strictly warranted by historical facts, although the conduct imputed to him is in keeping with his general character. Over the last years of his life lingers a deep obscurity. Even the manner of his death is uncertain. He was supposed to have been killed by the Indians; but this is doubted by the able and indefatigable author of the *History of Saco and Biddeford*.—Part I. p. 115.

85. *From the leaping brook to the Saco River.*

Foxwell's Brook flows from a marsh or bog, called the 'Heath,' in Saco, containing thirteen hundred acres. In this brook, and surrounded by wild and romantic scenery, is a beautiful waterfall, of more than sixty feet.

86. *Where zealous Hiacoomes stood.*

Hiacoomes, the first Christian preacher on Martha's Vineyard; for a biography of whom the reader is referred to Increase Mayhew's account of the Praying Indians, 1726. The following is related of him: 'One Lord's day, after meeting, where Hiacoomes had been preaching, there came in a Powwaw very angry, and said, "I know all the meeting Indians are liars. You say you don't care for the Powwaws;" then calling two or three of them by name, he railed at them, and told them they were deceived, for the Powwaws could kill all the meeting Indians, if they set about it. But Hiacoomes told him that he would be in the midst of all the Powwaws in the island, and they should do the utmost they could against him; and when they should do their worst by their witchcraft to kill him, he would without fear set himself against them, by remembering Jehovah. He told them also he did put all the Powwaws under his heel. Such was the faith of this good man. Nor were these Powwaws ever able to do these Christian Indians any hurt, though others were frequently hurt and killed by them.'—Mayhew, pp. 6, 7, c. 1.

87. *Because she cries with an ache in her tooth.*

'The tooth-ache,' says Roger Williams in his observations upon the language and customs of the New England tribes, 'is the only paine which will force their stoute hearts to cry.' He afterwards remarks that even the Indian women never cry as he has heard 'some of their men in this paine.'

88. *Wuttamuttata*, 'Let us drink.' *Weekan*, 'It is sweet.' *Vide* Roger Williams's *Key to the Indian Language*, 'in that parte of America called New England.'—London, 1643, p. 35.

89. *Wetuomanit*,—a house god, or demon. 'They—the Indians—have given me the

names of thirty-seven gods which I have, all which in their solemne Worships they invocate!'—R. Williams's *Briefe Observations of the Customs, Manners, Worships, etc., of the Natives, in Peace and Warre, in Life and Death:* on all which is added Spiritual Observations, General and Particular, of Chiefe and Special use—upon all occasions—to all the English inhabiting these parts; yet Pleasant and Profitable to the view of all Mene: p. 110, c. 21.

90. *Which marks afar the Desert Isle.*

Mt. Desert Island, the Bald Mountain upon which overlooks Frenchman's and Penobscot Bay. It was upon this island that the Jesuits made their earliest settlement.

91. *Half trembling, as he seeks to look.*

Father Hennepin, a missionary among the Iroquois, mentions that the Indians believed him to be a conjurer, and that they were particularly afraid of a bright silver chalice which he had in his possession. 'The Indians,' says Père Jerome Lallamant, 'fear us as the greatest sorcerers on earth.'

92. *For Bomazeen from Tacconock.*

Bomazeen is spoken of by Penhallow as 'the famous warrior and chieftain of Norridgewock.' He was killed in the attack of the English upon Norridgewock, in 1724.

93. *Like a shrouded ghost, the Jesuit stands.*

Père Ralle, or Rasles, was one of the most zealous and indefatigable of that band of Jesuit missionaries who at the beginning of the seventeenth century penetrated the forests of America, with the avowed object of converting the heathen. The first religious mission of the Jesuits to the savages in North America was in 1611. The zeal of the fathers for the conversion of the Indians to the Catholic faith knew no bounds. For this they plunged into the depths of the wilderness; habituated themselves to all the hardships and privations of the natives; suffered cold, hunger, and some of them death itself, by the extremest tortures. Père Brebeuf, after laboring in the cause of his mission for twenty years, together with his companion, Père Lallamant, was burned alive. To these might be added the names of those Jesuits who were put to death by the Iroquois,—Daniel, Garnier, Buteaux, La Riborerde, Goupil, Constantin, and Liegeouis. 'For bed,' says Father Lallamant, in his *Relation de ce qui s'est dans le pays des Hurons*, 1640, c. 3, 'we have nothing but a miserable piece of bark of a tree; for nourishment, a handful or two of corn, either roasted or soaked in water, which seldom satisfies our hunger; and after all, not venturing to perform even the ceremonies of our religion without being considered as sorcerers.' Their success among the natives, however, by no means equalled their exertions. Père Lallamant says: 'With respect to adult persons, in good health, there is little apparent success; on the contrary, there have been nothing but storms and whirlwinds from that quarter.'

Sebastian Ralle established himself, some time about the year 1670, at Norridgewock, where he continued more than forty years. He was accused, and perhaps not without justice, of exciting his Praying Indians against the English, whom he looked upon as the enemies not only of his king, but also of the Catholic religion. He was killed by the English in 1724, at the foot of the cross which his own hands had planted. His Indian church was broken up, and its members either killed outright or dispersed.

In a letter written by Ralle to his nephew he gives the following account of his church and his own labors: 'All my converts repair to the church regularly twice every day: first, very early in the morning, to attend mass, and again in the evening, to assist in the prayers at sunset. As it is necessary to fix the imagination of savages, whose attention is easily distracted, I have composed prayers, calculated to inspire them with just sentiments of the august sacrifice of our altars: they chant, or at least recite them aloud, during mass. Besides preaching to them on Sundays and saints' days, I seldom let a working-day pass without making a concise exhortation, for the purpose of inspiring them with horror at those vices to which they are most addicted, or to confirm them in the practice of some particular virtue.'—Vide *Lettres Edifiantes et Cur.*, vol. vi. p. 127.

94. *Pale priest! What proud and lofty dreams.*

The character of Ralle has probably never been correctly delineated. By his brethren of the Romish Church, he has been nearly apotheosized. On the other hand, our Puritan historians have represented him as a demon in human form. He was undoubtedly sincere in his devotion to the interests of his church, and not over-scrupulous as to the means of

advancing those interests. 'The French,' says the author of the *History of Saco and Biddeford*, 'after the peace of 1713, secretly promised to supply the Indians with arms and ammunition, if they would renew hostilities. Their principal agent was the celebrated Ralle, the French Jesuit.'—p. 215.

95. *Where are De Rouville and Castine.*

Hertel de Rouville was an active and unsparing enemy of the English. He was the leader of the combined French and Indian forces which destroyed Deerfield and massacred its inhabitants, in 1703. He was afterwards killed in the attack upon Haverhill. Tradition says that, on examining his dead body, his head and face were found to be perfectly smooth, without the slightest appearance of hair or beard.

96. *Cowesass?—tawhich wessaseen?*

Are you afraid?—why fear you?

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

This list follows the dates given with the poems. In the few cases where the dates have not been determined exactly, the poems are placed in the group with which they were published, when collected in volumes. The order is by years, and no attempt has here been made to preserve the exact order of composition under the year.

1825. The Exile's Departure.
The Deity.
The Vale of the Merrimac.
Benevolence.
1827. Ocean.
1828. The Sicilian Vespers.
The Earthquake.
The Song of the Vermonters.
1829. The Spirit of the North.
Judith at the Tent of Holofernes.
Metacom.
The Drunkard to his Bottle.
The Past and Coming Year.
1830. The Fair Quakeress.
Bolivar.
The Vaudois Teacher.
The Star of Bethlehem.
The Frost Spirit.
1831. Isabella of Austria.
The Fratricide.
The Cities of the Plain.
1832. Isabel.
Stanzas: 'Bind up thy tresses.'
To William Lloyd Garrison.
To a poetical Trio in the City of Gotham.
1833. The Female Martyr.
The Missionary.
The Call of the Christian.
Extract from 'A New England Legend.'
Toussaint L'Ouverture.
1834. Mogg Megone.
The Crucifixion.
Hymn: 'O Thou, whose presence went before.'
The Slave-Ships.
To the Memory of Charles B. Storrs.
Expostulation.
A Lament.
1835. The Demon of the Study.
The Yankee Girl.
The Hunters of Men.
Stanzas for the Times.
The Prisoner for Debt.
1836. A Day.
Clerical Oppressors.
A Summons.
To the Memory of Thomas Shipley.
The Moral Warfare.
1837. Massachusetts.
The Fountain.
Palestine.
Hymns from the French of Lamartine.
Hymn: 'O Holy Father! just and true.'
Ritner.
The Pastoral Letter.
Lines on the Death of S. Oliver Torrey.
1838. Pentucket.
The Familist's Hymn.
Pennsylvania Hall.
Album Verses.
The Farewell of a Virginia Slave Mother.
The Quaker of the Olden Time.

1839. The New Year.
The Relic.
The World's Convention.
1840. To ——, with a copy of Woolman's Journal.
1841. The Cypress-Tree of Ceylon.
St. John.
The Exiles.
Funeral Tree of the Sokokis.
The Norsemen.
Memories.
The Merrimac.
Lucy Hooper.
To a Friend.
Leggett's Monument.
Democracy.
1842. Follen.
The Gallows.
Raphael.
1843. The Knight of St. John.
Cassandra Southwick.
The New Wife and the Old.
Hampton Beach.
Ego.
To J. P.
Chalkley Hall.
Massachusetts to Virginia.
The Christian Slave.
Seed-Time and Harvest.
To the Reformers of England.
The Human Sacrifice.
1844. The Pumpkin.
The Bridal of Pennacook.
Ezekiel.
Channing.
To Massachusetts.
The Sentence of John L. Brown.
To Faneuil Hall.
Texas.
1845. New Hampshire.
At Washington.
To my Friend on the Death of his Sister.
Gone.
The Shoemakers.
The Fishermen.
The Lumbermen.
1846. The Ship-Builders.
The Pine-Tree.
Lines from a Letter to a Young Clerical Friend.
To Ronge.
Forgiveness.
The Branded Hand.
The Reformer.
To a Southern Statesman.
Daniel Neall.
A Letter supposed to be written by the Chairman of the 'Central Clique' at Concord, N. H.
The Freed Islands.
1847. The Lost Statesman.
The Angels of Buena Vista.
Barclay of Ury.
Yorktown.
To Delaware.
Song of Slaves in the Desert.
The Huskers.
The Drovers.
Daniel Wheeler.
My Soul and I.
To my Sister.
The Wife of Manoah to her Husband.
The Angel of Patience.
What the Voice said.
A Dream of Summer.
My Thanks.
Randolph of Roanoke.
Proem.
1848. The Slaves of Martinique.
The Curse of the Charter-Breakers.
The Wish of To-day.
Pæan.
The Poor Voter on Election Day.
The Crisis.
The Reward.
The Holy Land.
Worship.
The Peace Convention at Brussels.
1849. Calef in Boston.
To Pius IX.
On Receiving an Eagle's Quill from Lake Superior.
Kathleen.
Our State.
To Fredrika Bremer.
The Men of Old.
The Christian Tourists.
The Lakeside.
Autumn Thoughts.
The Legend of St. Mark.
1850. The Well of Loch Maree.
Ichabod.
In the Evil Days.
Elliott.
The Hill-Top.
To Avis Keene.
A Sabbath Scene.
Derne.
Lines on the Portrait of a Celebrated Publisher.
All's Well.
Dedication.
1851. Remembrance.
The Chapel of the Hermits.
The Prisoners of Naples.
To my Old Schoolmaster.
Invocation.
Wordsworth.
In Peace.
Kossuth.
To ——: Lines written after a Summer Day's Excursion.
Benedicite.
What State Street said.

1852. Pictures.
The Cross.
First-Day Thoughts.
Questions of Life.
April.
The Disenthralled.
The Peace of Europe.
Eva.
Astræa.
1853. Tauler.
Summer by the Lakeside.
Trust.
My Namesake.
The Dream of Pio Nono.
The Hero.
Rantoul.
Official Piety.
1854. The Voices.
Burns.
William Forster.
To Charles Sumner.
The Rendition.
The Haschish.
The Fruit-Gift.
Maud Muller.
The Hermit of the Thebaid.
Letter from a Missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.
The Kansas Emigrants.
A Memory.
1855. The Barefoot Boy.
My Dream.
Flowers in Winter.
Arisen at Last.
For Righteousness' Sake.
Inscription on a Sun-Dial.
1856. The Ranger.
The Mayflowers.
The Conquest of Finland.
The New Exodus.
A Lay of Old Time.
A Song, inscribed to the Frémont Clubs.
A Frémont Campaign Song.
What of the Day.
A Song for the Time.
The Pass of the Sierra.
The Panorama.
Burial of Barber.
To Pennsylvania.
Mary Garvin.
1857. Moloch in State Street.
The First Flowers.
The Sycamores.
Mabel Martin.
Skipper Ireson's Ride.
The Garrison of Cape Ann.
The Last Walk in Autumn.
The Gift of Tritemius.
1858. To James T. Fields.
The Palm-Tree.
From Perugia.
Le Marais du Cygne.
The Eve of Election.
The Old Burying-Ground.
Trinitas.
The Sisters.
The Pipes at Lucknow.
The Swan Song of Parson Avery.
Telling the Bees.
A Song of Harvest.
To George B. Cheever.
The Cable Hymn.
1859. Kenoza Lake.
The Preacher.
The Red River Voyageur.
The Double-Headed Snake of Newbury.
'The Rock' in El Ghor.
In Remembrance of Joseph Sturge.
The Over-Heart.
My Psalm.
The Memory of Burns.
Brown of Ossawatomie.
On a Prayer-Book.
The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall.
For an Autumn Festival.
1860. The Truce of Piscataqua.
The Shadow and the Light.
My Playmate.
The River Path.
Italy.
Naples.
The Summons.
The Quaker Alumni.
The Quakers are out.
1861. To William H. Seward.
Thy Will be done.
To John C. Frémont.
A Word for the Hour.
'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott.'
Cobbler Keezar's Vision.
Our River.
A Legend of the Lake.
1862. Amy Wentworth.
At Port Royal.
The Cry of a Lost Soul.
Mountain Pictures.
To Englishmen.
The Watchers.
The Waiting.
The Battle Autumn of 1862.
Astræa at the Capitol.
1863. The Proclamation.
The Answer.
To Samuel E. Sewall and Harriet W. Sewall.
A Memorial.
Andrew Rykman's Prayer.
The Countess.
Barbara Frietchie.
Anniversary Poem.
Hymn sung at Christmas by the Scholars of St. Helena's Island, S. C.

Mithridates at Chios.
1864. The Vanishers.
What the Birds said.
The Brother of Mercy.
The Wreck of Rivermouth.
Bryant on his Birthday.
Thomas Starr King.
Hymn for the Opening of Thomas Starr King's House of Worship.
Lines on leaving Appledore.
1865. Revisited.
To the Thirty-ninth Congress.
The Changeling.
The Grave by the Lake.
Kallundborg Church.
Hymn for the Celebration of Emancipation at Newburyport.
Laus Deo.
The Mantle of St. John de Matha.
The Peace Autumn.
The Eternal Goodness.
1866. Snow-bound.
The Common Question.
Our Master.
Abraham Davenport.
Lines on a Fly-Leaf.
The Maids of Attitash.
The Dead Ship of Harpswell.
Letter to Lucy Larcom.
1867. George L. Stearns.
The Worship of Nature.
Freedom in Brazil.
The Palatine.
The Tent on the Beach.
1868. The Hive at Gettysburg.
Divine Compassion.
The Clear Vision.
The Meeting.
The Two Rabbins.
Among the Hills.
The Dole of Jarl Thorkell.
Hymn for the House of Worship at Georgetown.
An Autograph.
After Election.
1869. Howard at Atlanta.
Garibaldi.
Norumbega.
The Pageant.
1870. Miriam.
In School-Days.
To Lydia Maria Child.
My Triumph.
Nauhaught, the Deacon.
The Prayer-Seeker.
The Laurels.
A Spiritual Manifestation.
To Lucy Larcom.
1871. The Sisters.
Marguerite.
The Robin.
The Singer.
Disarmament.
How Mary Grew.
Chicago.
My Birthday.
1872. The Pressed Gentian.
A Woman.
The Pennsylvania Pilgrim.
The Three Bells.
King Volmer and Elsie.
The Brewing of Soma.
Hymn for the Opening of Plymouth Church.
1873. Conductor Bradley.
John Underhill.
A Mystery.
In Quest.
The Friend's Burial.
The Prayer of Agassiz.
A Christmas Carmen.
1874. Kinsman.
The Golden Wedding of Longwood.
Vesta.
A Sea Dream.
Hazel Blossoms.
Sumner.
1875. 'I was a Stranger, and ye took Me in.'
The Two Angels.
The Healer.
Child Songs.
Lexington.
The Library.
A Farewell.
1876. June on the Merrimac.
Sunset on the Bearcamp.
Centennial Hymn.
1877. Giving and Taking.
Overruled.
Hymn of the Dunkers.
The Henchman.
In the 'Old South.'
Red Riding-Hood.
The Witch of Wenham.
The Problem.
Thiers.
Fitz-Greene Halleck.
King Solomon and the Ants.
Response.
At School-Close.
1878. The Seeking of the Waterfall.
At Eventide.
Oriental Maxims.
The Vision of Echard.
William Francis Bartlett.
Hymn of the Children.
1879. The Khan's Devil.
The Trailing Arbutus.
The Dead Feast of the Kol-Folk.
Inscriptions.
Our Autocrat.
Bayard Taylor.
The Emancipation Group.
Garrison.
The Landmarks.

1880. My Trust.
The Lost Occasion.
Voyage of the Jettie.
A Name.
The King's Missive.
St. Martin's Summer.
Valuation.
The Minister's Daughter.
The Jubilee Singers.
1881. Within the Gate.
The Book.
Rabbi Ishmael.
Greeting.
The Rock Tomb of Bradore.
Help.
Requirement.
Utterance.
By their Works.
The Word.
In Memory.
1882. The Bay of Seven Islands.
Garden.
An Autograph.
An Easter Flower Gift.
Godspeed.
The Wishing Bridge.
Storm on Lake Asquam.
On a Fly-Leaf of Longfellow's Poems.
At Last.
A Greeting.
The Poet and the Children.
Wilson.
The Mystic's Christmas.
1883. Our Country.
St. Gregory's Guest.
How the Women went from Dover.
What the Traveller said at Sunset.
A Summer Pilgrimage.
Winter Roses.
1884. The Light that is Felt.
The Two Loves.
The 'Story of Ida.'
Samuel E. Sewall.
Sweet Fern.
Abram Morrison.
Birchbrook Mill.
Lines written in an Album.
1885. Hymns of the Brahmo Somaj.
The Two Elizabeths.
Requital.
The Wood Giant.
The Reunion.
Adjustment.
An Artist of the Beautiful.
A Welcome to Lowell.
1886. How the Robin came.
Banished from Massachusetts.
The Homestead.
Revelation.
The Bartholdi Statue.
Norumbega Hall.
Mulford.
To a Cape Ann Schooner.
Samuel J. Tilden.
A Day's Journey.
1887. On the Big Horn.
A Legacy.
1888. The Brown Dwarf of Rügen.
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